

THE
WORKS
OF THE
Long-Mournful *and* Sorely-Distressed
ISAAC PENINGTON,
WHOM

The LORD, in his tender Mercy, at length Visited and
Relieved by the Ministry of that despised People called

QUAKERS;

AND IN THE
SPRINGINGS of that LIGHT, LIFE, and HOLY POWER in him,
which they had truly and faithfully testified of, and directed his
Mind to, were these things written;

AND
Are now published as a thankful Testimony of the Goodness of the LORD
unto him, and for the Benefit of others.

*They also that erred in spirit, shall know understanding; and they that
murmured, shall learn doctrine. ISAIAH XXIX. 24.*

VOL. II.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed by SAMUEL CLARK,
For JOHN and THOMAS KENDALL, Booksellers, in Colchester.

M DCC LXI.

©

arch
ations

THE

W. O. R. N. S.

Long Memorial and Society

ISAAK O. PENNINGTON

The IsaaK O. Pennington Society
has been organized for the purpose of
erecting a monument to the memory of
IsaaK O. Pennington, a native of
this city, who died on the 10th of
August, 1864, at the age of 70 years.



W. O. R. N. S.

THE SECOND

W. O. R. N. S.

For the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of IsaaK O. Pennington, a native of this city, who died on the 10th of August, 1864, at the age of 70 years.

T H E C O N T E N T S O F T H E S E C O N D V O L U M E.

A QUESTION to the Professors of Christianity, ———	Page 1
Some Queries concerning Christ and his Appearances, ———	15
An Incitation to Professors ———	24
Some Propositions and Considerations, concerning Church Worships and Ordinances ———	28
The Sounding of Bowels towards thee, O England! ———	31
A faithful Guidance to the Principle and Path of Truth, ———	33
Some Questions and Answers from the Tenth of JOHN. ———	37
To such as are not Satisfied with a Profession, ———	41
Concerning Applying the Promises, ———	44
A Postscript concerning Deceit and being Deceived. ———	47
A brief Account of my Soul's Travel, &c. ———	49
Some Things relating to Religion, proposed to the Royal Society, —	55
Concerning the Ground of Certainty in Religion, ———	57
Of Tenderness of Spirit and Persecution, ———	60
A Query concerning Separation, ———	ib.
Concerning the Washing away of Sin from the Conscience ———	61
Some Questions and Answers, concerning the Church of the New Covenant —	64
Some Queries to Professors. ———	69
Of the Church in its first and pure State, in its declining State, in its declined State, and in its Recovery, ———	71
The Way of Salvation in the Covenant of Life opened, ———	87
Queries concerning the New Covenant, ———	96
An Exhortation to all People, but more especially to such as are Desolate and Distressed, ———	98
A Visit of Tender and Upright Love, to such, as among the many Professions and Ways of Religion, retain any Measure of Sincerity, ———	101
A brief Account of the Ground of Certainty and Satisfaction, which it hath pleased the Lord to establish in my Heart ———	110
A Question answered, about the Way of knowing the Motions, Doctrines, and Teachings of Christ's Spirit, ———	113
Somewhat Touching the Gospel Rest, or Sabbath, ———	118
Some Queries to such as complain of Want of Power, ———	120
A Postscript containing further Queries concerning the New Covenant —	125
An Enquiry after Truth and Righteousness, and after the People whom the Lord Establisheth, and will Establish therein ———	129

C O N T E N T S.

Some Queries on ISAIAH liv.	Page 131
The Holy Truth and People defended, in Answer to the chief Passages in a Letter,	135
The Ancient Principle of Truth, or the Light within asserted,	169
An Appeal to God's Witness in all Consciences	185
Naked Truth, or Truth Nakedly Manifesting itself,	197
Some Experiences added,	218
A few Words concerning the true Christ,	242
A few Words to my Native Country,	243
The Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Mystery, and in the Outward,	246
A brief Account concerning the People called Quakers,	259
A few Words concerning the Way of Peace,	263
Postscript, containing a few Words concerning the People called Quakers,	266
An Exhortation to true Christianity,	268
To the Jews Natural and to the Jews Spiritual,	271
A few Words to England, my Native Country,	287
Three Queries upon three Verses of the 46th Psalm,	289
Concerning the true Church and Ministry under the Gospel,	290
Some Questions answered, concerning the Lamb's War,	293
Some Sensible and Weighty Queries, concerning some Things very sweet and necessary to be Experienced in the truly Christian State,	299
Postscript, containing some Queries on ISA. l. 10, 11,	305
The Everlasting Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Blessed Effects thereof Testified to from Experience,	308
A Further Testimony to Truth, Revived out of the Ruins of the Apostasy,	315
An Objection, concerning the Newness of the Way of Truth, answered, &c.	322
A Caution to those who are at any Time touched with the Power of Truth,	324
An Objection against the Principle which we bear witness to, answered,	330
Some Questions and Answers concerning the New Covenant,	331
A Question or two, relating to Election, answered,	335
A Question answered concerning the Ground of Mens Misunderstanding and Wrestling of Scriptures,	336
Some Questions, Answers, and Queries, concerning Deceit and Deceivers,	338
That the Way of Life and Salvation is freely held forth by God to all,	340
Some Questions answered concerning the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees,	243
Some Questions answered concerning Blasphemy, and a Question concerning Miracles answered,	348
Some further Questions answered concerning the New Covenant,	350
A brief Account concerning Silent Meetings,	352
Life and Immortality brought to Light through the Gospel,	355
A few Words in General to those that desire the Knowledge of the true God,	358
I. Some Queries concerning the State of the Church, as it was in the Apostles Days, and was to be afterwards,	360
II. ————— on Cha. xxix, & xxx. of DEUT. compared with ROM. x.	362
III. ————— concerning Destruction and Salvation,	364
IV. ————— on COLOSS. i. 27, 28, 29.	365
V. ————— concerning the Way of Life, and Mystery of the Gospel,	367
VI. ————— concerning Righteousness or Justification,	369
VII.	

C O N T E N T S.

VII. Some Queries about being under the Law, and being under Grace,	Page 370
VIII. _____ for the Professors of Christianity to consider of, and try their States by _____	371
IX. A Question answered about Preaching the Gospel after the Apostasy,	373
X. Two Questions answered; one concerning others not Learning what God Teacheth us; the other concerning the Way of his Teaching us, —	375
XI. Of the threefold Appearance of Christ; to wit, under the Law, in a Body of Flesh, and in his Spirit and Power, _____	376
XII. Concerning Mount Sinai and Mount Sion, _____	382
XIII. Of the Signification of Mount Sinai and Mount Sion, _____	383
XIV. Concerning the Temple and Sacrifices under the Gospel, _____	385
XV. Some Questions concerning the Light of Christ's Spirit, answered, _____	386
XVI. The Way to know one's Election, and to be fully assured of it, —	391
XVII. Some Observations concerning the Priesthood of Christ, from several Passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews, _____	394
XVIII. A brief Relation of the Estate or Condition the Lord found many of us in, &c. _____	400
XIX. Concerning the Gospel-State, _____	408
XX. Concerning Baptism, _____	415
XXI. Some Questions answered, concerning the Gentiles doing by Nature the Things contained in the Law, _____	423
XXII. Concerning the Rule of the Children of the New Covenant, —	425
XXIII. Some Queries concerning the Law, or Word; Statutes, Testimonies, Judgments, &c. which David was so delighted in, and prayed so earnestly for, _____	428
XXIV. Some Observations on 2 P E T. iii. 14, 15, 16. _____	431
XXV. Concerning the Gospel-Ministry, or Right Way of Teaching and Learning the Mystery of Life and Salvation, _____	433
XXVI. A few Words concerning the Old and New Covenant, with some Queries thereupon, _____	435
XXVII. Queries on R O M. vi. vii. and viii. _____	437
XXVIII. A further Testimony in Brief, concerning the Work of God upon our Hearts, who are called Quakers, _____	442
XXIX. A brief Account of the Ground of our Worship, and how it comes to pass that we cannot Conform to the Spirit of this World, or to the Wills of Men therein, but only to the Spirit and Will of our God, _____	444
XXX. Some Queries concerning knowing and owning the Lord Jesus Christ truly and aright. _____	445
A Reply to thy Animadversions, _____	469
A few Experiences, concerning some of the Weighty Things relating to God's Everlasting Kingdom, _____	481
I. A faithful Testimony concerning the True and Pure Way of Life, —	484
II. Concerning the Perfecting of God's Work in the Heart, _____	486
III. Concerning the True Christ, how it may be certainly and infallibly known which is he, _____	487
IV. Some Queries to such as affirm the Scriptures to be the only Rule, and deny the Spirit, the Seed of the Kingdom, &c. to be the Rule of the Children of the New Covenant, _____	488
V. Concerning the Light wherewith Christ the Life enlighteneth every Man, _____	490
VI. A few Words further concerning Perfection, _____	490
VII. Concerning Imputation of Righteousness, _____	492
VIII. Some Queries concerning the Time and Work of Reformation, —	493
IX. Some _____	

C O N T E N T S.

IX. Some Queries concerning the Spirit of Christ, &c.	496
X. Of the true Way (the Way of Holiness, the Way of Life) and of the True Teaching and Knowledge,	498
XI. Concerning Separation from the Spirit and Ways of the World,	499
A Treatise concerning God's Teachings and Christ's Law, &c.	503
I. Concerning God's Teachings,	506
II. Concerning the Law of Christ,	509
III. A brief Relation concerning myself, in Reference to what has befallen me in my Pursuit after Truth,	511
IV. A Question about Preaching the Everlasting Gospel, answered,	513
V. Concerning Christ's Ministry, or Priesthood,	515
VI. Concerning the true Knowledge of Christ,	ib.
VII. A few Words more concerning the Right Way of Knowing, as it is witnessed to in the Scriptures, and experienced in the Hearts of those that truly and livingly know the Lord,	517
VIII. Concerning Christ's Righteousness, &c.	ib.
IX. Of the Grace of the Gospel,	520
X. A Question answered, concerning Real Holiness,	523
XI. Concerning the Law of Sin in the Fleshly Mind, and the Law of Life and Holiness in the Renewed Mind; and whence each have their Strength	524
XII. Concerning God's gathering us Home to himself, who are a People despised and rejected of Men, and in Scorn by them called Quakers,	526
XIII. A few Words concerning the Worship which our God hath taught us,	530
A Question answered concerning Reading the Scriptures Aright,	532
A few Words to such as Complain for Want of Power,	540
Somewhat Relating to Church Government, &c.	541
Remarks upon some Passages, in a late Book Entituled, "Antichrist's Transformations Within, &c."	544
Some Misrepresentations of Me concerning Church Government, &c.	565
The Seed of God, and of his Kingdom, treated and testified of according to the Scriptures of Truth, and according to True Experience, felt in the Heart from the God of Truth,	593
I. What is Hid or Wrapped up in this precious Heavenly Seed,	598
II. The Nature of this Seed	603
III. Of the Effects,	605
Some Queries concerning God's Kingdom, whereby the Seed thereof may be the better Illustrated and Understood,	607
An Epistle to all Serious Professors of the Christian Religion,	613
A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, given forth by me I. P. concerning the Gospel-Baptism; with Answers to some other Queries returned, in a Paper subscribed N. B.	621
Epistles to Friends,	645
Some Queries concerning Compulsion in Religion,	660
Concerning the Dispensation of the Gospel, or the Dispensation of the Son in Spirit, which is the last Dispensation,	665
Some Experiences which it hath Pleased the Lord to Give me, concerning his Way, his Truth, his Church, and People, &c.	670
Concerning the Times and Seasons, both which have been, and which are yet to be,	675

Q U E S T I O N
TO THE
PROFESSORS of CHRISTIANITY,

W H E T H E R
They have the true, living, powerful, saving Knowledge
of **CHRIST**, or no?

W I T H
Some **QUERIES** concerning **CHRIST**, and his **APPEARANCES**;
his taking upon him our **Flesh**; as also concerning his **Flesh** and
Blood, and our being formed thereof, and feeding thereon.

A N D
An Incitation to Professors seriously to consider, whether they or we fail in
the true Acknowledgment and owning of the **CHRIST** which died at
Jerusalem.

L I K E W I S E
Some Propositions and Considerations concerning the Nature of Church-
Worships and Ordinances since the Death of the Apostles, for the sake
of the Simplicity, which hath been long held captive therein.

W I T H
The Sounding of Bowels towards thee, **O ENGLAND!**

Also a faithful Guidance to the Principle and Path of **TRUTH**.

W I T H
Some sensible experimental **QUESTIONS** and **ANSWERS** from the Tenth
Chapter of **JOHN**.

By **I S A A C P E N I N G T O N**,
Prisoner in **AYLESBURY**, who (by the Counsel of the **LORD**) hath chosen
rather to suffer Affliction with the despised People of **GOD**, than to enjoy
the Pleasures of Sin for a Season.

[A]

NOTES

PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY



THIS is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Whom did the Father send? Did he not send the Son of his love? From whence did he send him? Did he not send him out of his own bosom? Whither did he send him? Did he not send him into the world, to take upon him a body, and glorify the name of the Father, doing his will therein? He laid down his glory, stripping himself of the form of God, and appearing in habit as a man, in their raiment, with their garment upon him; in which, as a servant, the seed (the heir of all) served the Father. And now his work being as good as done, he looks back at the glory which he had laid down for the Father's sake, looking up to the Father for the restoring of it to him again. "I have glorified thee on the earth," saith he, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," *John xvii. 4, 5.*

Now having sought and travelled (from my childhood) after the true knowledge of God, and of his Christ; and having been satisfied with nothing else that ever I could meet with, and having at length (through the tender mercy of the Lord, and guidance of his Spirit) met with this, and been satisfied therewith, finding it to be the eternal life, the true food, the living power, the pure rest, the joy and salvation of my soul, I cannot but testify it to those that lay out their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not.

We (some of us, at least) laid out as much of our money as others, who now despise us, have done; and as much of our labour; and (I may speak it in the fear of the Lord, and in true sense, without boasting) some of us had as much of that which they feed on, and call bread, as they have now. Yet when the Lord brought us to the true balance, we found it not to be bread, nor able to give the soul true satisfaction. The bread was not that which

P R E F A C E.

iii

which we then called bread, but that which we overlooked, and wist not what it was. But the eternal life which was hid with the Father, and is manifested in the Son, and made known to the soul (as the Son is manifested to it, and revealed in it) that is bread indeed, that is meat which perisheth not, but will endure when all literal and outward knowledge of God and Christ fails, and will fall short of satisfying that hunger of the soul, which is after the substance itself.

Now to draw mens minds to a sense of truth, to a sense of that which is the thing, that they might know the bread indeed, that they might know the living waters, come to them and drink thereof, and find Christ in them a well of water springing up to eternal life; therefore was it in my heart to give forth this question, and the ensuing queries; which he that rightly answers, must know the thing; and he that doth not rightly know the thing, by his inability to answer, may find that he doth not, and so may wait upon God that he may receive the knowledge of it, and come to it for the eternal life which it freely giveth.

The Jews were puzzled with a literal knowledge of the law and prophets, and about the Messiah to come, according to their understanding of the prophecies concerning him, and so were kept from the true knowledge thereby. Most sorts of those that now profess Christ, are puzzled about a knowledge concerning the outward body, flesh, and blood of Christ, according as they apprehend the scriptures to speak; and so the veil is over their hearts likewise, and they cannot see the eternal life and substance, no more than the Jews, but by an outward literal knowledge are kept back from the thing, as the Jews were. Now the breathing of my heart to the Lord is, To take away the veil of all hearts that sincerely desire after truth, and to open the true eye in them, that they may see the desire and beloved of their souls, and may be led by him into the true travel, out of self, towards the kingdom; yea, into the very land of the living, where the food of life is fed upon, where the living springs flow, where are vineyards which we planted not, and dwelling-places which we built not, where the fruit of the vine of God's planting (the wine of the kingdom) is drunk of, even now in the kingdom, with the Father and Son in the Spirit, who are One and All there.

The Lord give a sense and understanding, that the ear of the needy, the afflicted in spirit, the mourners, the captives, the bowed down may hear, and may be drawn to touch that which hath the virtue in it, and which effectually redeemeth those that wait upon it, from all that boweth down and oppresseth.

AP 59

A
Q U E S T I O N
T O T H E
P R O F E S S O R S o f C H R I S T I A N I T Y .

THE Question is not, whether they know what is said of Christ in the scriptures; but whether they know it *savingly, truly, livingly, powerfully*? Yea, they may know what is said of him, and yet not know him of whom those things are said. As it was with the Scribes and Pharisees; they knew what was said of Christ in the law and prophets; but they knew not himself, when he appeared in that body of flesh. So men may now know what the apostles and the evangelists have said concerning his appearance in a body of flesh (concerning his birth, circumcision, baptism, preaching, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, &c.), and yet not know him of whom these things are said. Yea, they may know what is said concerning the word which was from the beginning, and yet not know the word, the power, the life itself.

Since the prevailing of the apostles testimony, the way of the enemy hath not been directly to deny Christ, but to bring men into such a knowledge of Christ, as saves not. And as the enemy did own Christ, when he appeared in that body of flesh, saying, *I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God*; so he hath found it for his advantage, almost ever since, to own that appearance of his. So that this he doth not oppose, nor mens knowledge and understanding of scriptures, so as to confirm them in this. But the saving knowledge, the true knowledge, the living knowledge, the powerful knowledge of truth, that he always opposeth; for that alone overturns and destroys his kingdom in man, and brings man from out of his reach.

Now there is a vast difference between knowing the relations concerning a thing, and knowing the thing related of. And there is also a great deal

A Question to the Professors of Christianity. 5

deal of difference between believing the relations concerning a thing, and believing in the thing which is related of.

Spiritual things cannot be savingly known, but in union with them, in the receiving of them. A man can never really know the Spirit of God, by all that can be said concerning it, but he must first feel somewhat of it, whereby he may truly know it. So the peace, the joy, the life, the power, they pass the understanding; and a man can never rightly know them by reading, or comprehending ever so much concerning them; but by coming out of himself, and travelling thither where they are given and made manifest, he may come into acquaintance with them. And if the peace which Christ gives, the joy, the life, the power, cannot be thus known by literal descriptions; how can he, who is the fullness of all, the fountain of them all, the treasury of all perfection, in whom are hid all the riches and treasures of wisdom and knowledge; how can he be known by outward and literal descriptions?

Now we have travelled through these things. We knew formerly what ye know now; and we also know now, what God hath given us further; and what our former knowledge was, and what our present knowledge is. And this is it which gives us satisfaction.

Our knowledge is in a principle, wherein we receive our capacity of knowing, and wherein the Father (from whom the principle came) teacheth us. And this is his way of teaching us; by making us one with the thing he teacheth. Thus we learn Christ, by being born of him, by putting him on. Thus we know his righteousness, his life, his wisdom, his power, by receiving a proportion of them, which giveth an ability to discern and acknowledge the fullness. And in this we receive the understanding of the scriptures, and know the seed of the woman (which bruise the serpent's head), by receiving the seed, by feeling its growth in us, and its power over the enemy. Then we know the thing; likewise we know the woman that brings forth this seed after the Spirit, which is the Jerusalem above; and we know also, and singly acknowledge, the bringing forth of it outwardly after the flesh. This seed we know to be the seed of Abraham, the seed of David after the flesh, and the seed of God after the power of the endless life; and we are taught of God to give the due honour to each; to the seed of God in the first place, to the seed of David in the second place. There was the seed that wrought the thing, which seed was the life; and the seed in which he wrought it, which was formed into a vessel like ours, but without sin, in which the pure Lamb appeared in the pure power of life, which kept the vessel pure; and so he (who was to be the first fruits) had the honour above all his brethren, being anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

But we also are born of the same seed. He is formed in us; we are formed of him; we are as well of his flesh and blood, as he was of ours. And by being thus formed, and feeling him grow up in us, and receiving
an

6 *A Question to the Professors of Christianity.*

an understanding from him, and in him, thus we come to know him, and to understand the words of scripture concerning him. By feeling and knowing the Lamb in our vessels, we know also what was the Lamb in his vessel.

Thus we know things in the certainty and demonstration of God's Spirit, even in the light which shines from him, and in the life which he begets; and we speak of things as they are, and as we feel them to be in the true life, which the Spirit of Christ hath begotten in us. And we can truly say concerning the scriptures, That now we believe, not so much because of the relation of things concerning Christ, which we have found in them; but because we have seen and received the thing which the scriptures speak of, and find it to be the very thing indeed, the very Christ of God, the spotless one, the living garment of righteousness and salvation, wherein God findeth no fault, and in which the soul appears without blame before him. And concerning this, can we speak words of its nature, words of its virtue, words of its life, power, and righteousness; which that which is of the flesh cannot hear, but that which is born of God, naturally owneth and understandeth. Why so? Because it knoweth the nature of the thing, and receiveth them in the favour thereof. Can life deny life? Can the birth of life deny that which springs out of the same womb? No, no. The children which are born of wisdom, do justify wisdom in its several sproutings forth and appearances; but that which denies it, is a birth after the letter, a birth after the literal and outward knowledge of things, a birth of the comprehending wisdom; that indeed reproacheth and blasphemeth the incomprehensible wisdom, in its incomprehensible ways, and would restrain life to what they apprehend, or can comprehend by the letter concerning it.

And this may be a great evidence to professors, that they know not indeed Christ in his nature, Spirit, life, and power; because they speak not of him as persons who feel the thing, and speak from the present sense of it, and acquaintance with it, but only as persons that bring forth a notion they have received into their understandings. And yet they fail therein also; for they speak not of Christ according as the scriptures hold him forth, compared one with another, but as they have grossly apprehended concerning him from some scriptures, as the Jews outward did. For the scriptures speak not only of a body, but also of him that appeared in the body; nor only of bodily flesh, blood, and bones, but also of such flesh and bones, whereof Christ and his church consist. He is Christ (say the scriptures) who is one with the Father, who came from the Father, in whom the Father was, and who was in the Father; so said Jesus of himself (lifting up his eyes to heaven, and praying to the Father of his disciples, and the children whom the Father had given him) more than once in that seventeenth chapter of John. Yea he is Christ, whom a man cannot see, but he must see the Father also; and whom, whosoever seeth the Father, seeth; who was before Abraham

A Question to the Professors of Christianity. 7

Abraham was; whom no man could know whence he was, even as no man can know whence the Father is. Christ granted the Jews that they knew him, and whence he was as to his body; and yet for all that, he was the Christ who was to come, whom no man knew from whence he was. What was that, Christ called me, speaking to Philip? *Hast thou not known me, Philip? Hast thou not seen me?* What, dost thou know me after the flesh, after the body? Dost thou take that for me? Have I been so long with you, and do you know me no better than so? The body is from below; the body is like one of yours (only sanctified by the Father, and preserved without sin); but I am the same Spirit, life, and being with the Father. We are one substance, one pure power of life, and we cannot be divided; but he that sees one, must needs see both; and he that knows one, must needs know both. This is the Lamb of God which John bare witness of, which he said was before him, *John i. 15.* which the body was not.

Now friends, if you have this living spiritual knowledge, if ye hold it in him that is true; then own and acknowledge it (as it is expressed in the scriptures, and as God hath now brought it forth in his people), that ye may manifest yourselves to that which is of God, that ye are of him. There is an understanding and wisdom of man, and there is a witness of God, which witness gives true judgment. Man (at best) judgeth but according as things appear to him from the scriptures; but the witness judgeth of the things of God in the demonstration of the Spirit, according as they are felt and known to be in him.

But if ye have not this knowledge, but have long laid out your money and labour for that which is not bread, nor can yield the true satisfaction; Oh! come to the waters, and receive that which is given freely, without money and without price! Oh! sell all for the pearl, for the knowledge which is of life, for the knowledge which is life! *I am the way, the truth, and the life,* saith Christ; this is life eternal to know. And wait to feel the rock laid as a foundation in you, even the seed of God, the life of Christ, the Spirit of Christ revealed in you, and your souls born of it, and built upon it. Oh! that ye could come out of your own understandings, that ye might feel and receive the love of my heart, and know the travail of my bowels for you; that ye might be born of the truth, and know and receive it as it is in Jesus, and as it is felt in the Spirit, and its own pure power.

Now a little further, to remove the scruples and prejudices out of the minds of such as sometimes have been touched with the power of truth, and have had the witness of God reached to in their hearts; but afterwards the enemy hath raised mists, and cast blocks in their way, stirring up in them hard thoughts against us, as if we denied what the scriptures affirm in this thing, and indeed (in effect) that Christ which died at Jerusalem, and set up a natural principle within, instead thereof:

To

A Question to the Professors of Christianity.

To remove this out of the minds of the honest-hearted (who in the guidance of God might light on this paper) I shall open my heart nakedly herein.

1. We do own that the word of God (the only begotten of the Father) did take up a body of the flesh of the virgin Mary, who was of the seed of David, according to the scriptures, and did the will of the Father therein, in holy obedience unto him, both in life and death.

2. That he did offer up the flesh and blood of that body (though not only so; for he poured out his soul, he poured out his life) a sacrifice or offering for sin (do not, oh! do not stumble at it; but rather wait on the Lord to understand it: for we speak in this matter what we know) a sacrifice unto the Father, and in it tasted death for every man; and that it is upon consideration (and through God's acceptance of this sacrifice for sin) that the sins of believers are pardoned, that God might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, or who is of the faith of Jesus.

3. What is attributed to that body, we acknowledge and give to that body in its place, according as the scripture attributeth it, which is through and because of that which dwelt and acted in it. But that which sanctified and kept the body pure (and made all acceptable in him) was the life, holiness, and righteousness of the Spirit. And the same thing that kept his vessel pure, it is the same thing that cleanseth us. The value which the natural flesh and blood had, was from that; in its coming from that, in its acting in that, in its suffering through that: yea, indeed, that hath the virtue; that is it which is of an unchangeable nature, which abideth for ever; which is pure, and maketh pure for ever; and it is impossible for a man to touch it, but he must feel cleansing by it. Now this living virtue and power man was shut out from by the fall; but through the true knowledge of the death of Christ, the way is made open for it again, and man brought to it to be baptized, washed, cleansed, sanctified, fitted for and filled with life. So that this is it that doth the thing; this is it from whence Christ had his own flesh and blood (for we are taught, both by the Spirit, and by the scriptures, to distinguish between Christ's own flesh and that of ours, which he took up and made his); which flesh and blood we feed of in the Spirit; which they cannot feed on which serve at the outward tabernacle; nor they neither which know only the outward body; but they only that feed in the Spirit.

Now of this thing we might speak yet more clearly and plainly, could men hear our words. But if we have spoken to you earthly things (in parables and figures) suitable to your understanding, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if we speak to you heavenly things; if we should tell you plainly of the Father, in whom is all the life of the Son, and all the virtue and salvation that ever the Son had from him? The Jews were to learn in types, figures, and shadows, till Christ came. And after Christ came, he also taught them in resemblances and similitudes of things: and the apostle wrote

wrote and spake much to persons, as just coming out of that state, in a language suited to that state. But he that comes into the thing itself, and is taught there by the Spirit, after he is grown up and made capable, he is taught plainly the nature of the heavenly things, and the words of the apostles (concerning the deep things of God) which are mysterious to others, are manifest and plain to him. Yea, the Lord so teacheth him things, as words cannot utter; that is, he so knoweth the peace of God, the joy of his Spirit, the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, his wisdom, righteousness, and pure precious ways of sanctifying the heart, the tender mercy, faithfulness, and rich love of the Father, &c. as he cannot utter to any man; nay, so as he never learned (nor could learn) from words about the things; but by the sense and experience of the thing itself, the Lord (in whom are the depths of life, and who giveth the sense and understanding of the deep things of the Spirit) opening them in him, and manifesting them to him. And indeed this is the right and excellent way of knowledge, to come into the union, to come into the thing itself; to learn in the union, to see and know in the thing. This is the way that the Lord teacheth all his children in the new covenant, by the inward life; by the pure light within, by the inward demonstration of his Spirit, by the power and virtue of the truth itself, which it hath in him that is true. And he that is in the Son, hath some measure of this life; and he that hath not some measure of this life, is not in the Son; but in a talk and wise knowledge of things after the flesh, which will perish, and he with it, who abideth there. For no man can be saved, but by coming into the knowledge which is of a pure, eternal, living, saving nature. Can an opinion which a man takes up concerning Christ from the scriptures (and casting himself thereupon) save him? For it is no more than an opinion or judgment unto a man, unless he be in the life and power of the thing itself. Then indeed it is truth to him, knowledge in him, right knowledge; otherwise it is but knowledge falsely so called; knowledge which will not subdue his heart to truth, nor hath its seat there; but in his head, making him wise and able there to oppose truth, and so bringing him into a state of condemnation, wrath and misery, beyond the heathen, and making him harder to be wrought upon by the light and power of the truth, than the very heathen. Therefore consider your ways, O professors of Christianity! and do not despise the hand which is stretched forth to you in the love of God, and in the motion and guidance of his Spirit, who condescends to you exceedingly, that he might reach to his own in you, and scatter your apprehensions, imaginations, and conceivings about the meanings of scriptures (which are as so many chains of death and darkness upon you) that ye might come to him in whom is life, and who gives life freely to all who come to him. Oh! observe what bars were in the way of the scribes and Pharisees! They would not come to him that they might have life; nay, indeed, they could not, as they stood. There are greater bars in your way; yea, it is harder for many of you to

come to him, than it was for them. My upright desire to the Lord for you is, that he would remove the stumbling-blocks out of your way, that he would batter and knock down the flesh in you, that he would strip you of all your knowledge of scriptures according to the flesh, that ye might be made by him capable of knowing and receiving things according to the Spirit, and then ye will know how to understand, honour, and make use of the letter also; but till then ye cannot but make use of it both against your own souls, and against Christ and his truth.

And then for setting up a natural principle, we are further from that than ye are aware. For we were as shy of this, and jealous that it was a natural principle, as ye can be, and started from it, divers of us, till the Lord, by his eternal power, and demonstration of his Spirit, reached our hearts, and shewed us that it was the seed of the kingdom (even the root of all the spiritual life, that either we ourselves formerly, or ever any else received at any time) and gave us the sight of the things of the kingdom in it, and at length wrought that in us, and for us, by it, which never was wrought in us before, and which can be wrought by nothing else but the power of the Spirit. Now having certainly felt and known the thing in our own hearts, and having also seen the snares and nets which the enemy lays for you, whereby he keeps you from the true bread, and from the water and wine of the kingdom (even as he kept us formerly), how can we hold our peace, but witness to you (in the love and drawings of the Spirit of the Lord) of the truth, life, and power which we have felt in Jesus, though ye become our enemies therefore? Nor do we this to bring you to another opinion, or outward way (that is not our end); but that ye might feel the thing itself, and know assuredly what is the truth, in that which never was deceived itself, nor ever deceived any; nor will suffer any to be deceived who are joined to it, and abide in it. Oh! why should ye wander in the dark opinions and uncertainties of the night? Why should ye not rather come to that wherein the light of the day springs, and out of which it shines? And can the natural man (who hath his eyes) be deceived about the light of the natural day? Doth he not know the light of the day, both from the lights, and also from the darkness of the night? Ten thousand times more certain and inwardly satisfied is he, who is born of the spiritual day, brought forth in the light thereof, and who spiritually sees, lives, and walks therein. So that there is no doubt in him who is grown up into the thing; but he hath the assurance of faith (which is far above the assurance of outward sense or reason) and the assurance of understanding. Oh! blessed is he who hath an eye to see, an ear to hear, an heart to understand, the things which God hath revealed by his Spirit in this our day, the living way which he hath now made manifest, the principle of life that he hath raised out of the grave of death. But he that reproacheth and speaketh evil of this (that will neither enter in himself, nor suffer others) he is far from receiving the blessing or blessedness of this seed; but groweth up
in

A Question to the Professors of Christianity. YI

in the wrong nature and spirit, the end whereof is to be burned, with all that is in union with it, and groweth up from it. Therefore come out from that spirit; come out of that dark mind and nature, which never saw, nor can see the truth; but setteth up opinions and appearances of things instead of it; and receive the anointing which is given with and in the seed, which is raised in some, and visited in many, in this day of the Lord's love and tender mercy; to whom the living, the sensible, the redeemed sing praises, and on whom they wait, for the further manifesting of his power and glory in them daily more and more.

Now, friends, if ye will know aright, or believe aright, ye must know and believe in him, who was with the Father before the world was; who was the Saviour, the Jesus, the Christ, from everlasting. For what makes him so? Is it not his nature? Is it not the power of salvation in him? His taking up a body made no alteration in him, added nothing to him; only it was necessary that he should take it up, to fulfill the will in it, and to offer it up a sacrifice in his own life and Spirit to the Father. This we firmly believe; and this also we cannot but say further, that the virtue, the value, the worth, the excellency of what was done by him in the body, was not of the body, but it was in him before time, in time, and will be after time, and for ever: yea, it is he to whom the name Jesus and Christ did of right belong before he took up the body: and he only put forth in the body the saving virtue which he had before, which belonged to the nature, to the anointing in him, whether ever he had saved any with it or no. And this virtue, this life, this Spirit, this nature of his, is the food, the righteousness, the garment of life and salvation, which he (through the death of the body) made and prepared a living way for the soul to come to, to feed on, and be cloathed with. I can hardly stop speaking of these things for your sakes, that through my words (or the words of whom the Lord shall please) ye might come to feel that which is able to give you the holy understanding, and might come to the true sense and experience of the truth itself, and might see who hath blinded you, and how he hath blinded you, and fed you with husks and dry food, instead of that which hath the true living sap in it. But while ye see and judge in that which is wrong, ye must needs judge amiss both of yourselves and others, and also of the truth itself, and of the words spoken, either formerly or now, concerning it, whereby ye expose and bring yourselves under the righteous judgment of the truth itself, even of the Son, and the light of his day, which hath power from the Father to judge all false appearances, deceits, and deceivers.

P O S T S C R I P T.

IT hath pleased the Lord, as he manifested his Christ gloriously before the apostasy, so to manifest him so again. For he was not only born (in the flesh) of the virgin Mary; but he was also born in the Spirit of the woman clothed with the sun, which had the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She also brought forth the man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, *Rev. xii.*

Now of this appearance and return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his fresh bringing forth of his life and power in his body, the church, there are many witnesses, who have seen, felt, and tasted thereof, with the eyes and senses which are of God, and of the new-birth. And of this (in the love and good-will of God, and from the drawings and requirings of his Spirit) they bear witness to others, that they also might come to see the glory and brightness of his day, and rejoice therein. For indeed it is a glorious day inwardly in spirit, to those that are quickened and gathered to the living Shepherd and Bishop of the soul, by the eternal arm of his power. And happy is the eye that sees the things that they see, and the ear that hears what they hear, and the heart which understands the things which God hath revealed in and unto them by his Spirit.

Glorious was the appearance of Christ in the flesh; but there were blocks in the way of the Jews, that they could not know, own, believe and receive him. And glorious is the administration of his life in Spirit, in this day of his power; but there are also blocks lying in the way of them to whom it is sent, which cause them to stumble at it, and keep them both from letting it into them, and also from giving up to it. But blessed was he who was not offended in Christ then, and blessed is he who is not offended at him now. For he that is offended at him, who is life, and gives life, stumbling at the present way of dispensation which God hath chosen to give it out by, how shall he live? This is the cause that so many poor hearts lie mourning and grovelling on the earth, groaning because of their sins, fearing because of the strength of the enemy, and the corruptions of their own hearts, which are continually ready to betray them into his hands; because they know not him who hath stretched out his arm, and is come in his power to deliver; but are prejudiced against the way wherein he hath and doth deliver. Yea, they know not his voice who calls, *Come unto me; I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, shall receive my strength; and though he were ever so weak, shall become as David; and though ever so unclean, shall find the waters which spring from my well to cleanse him, and nourish him to life everlasting.*

How tenderly did Christ visit the Jews in the days of his flesh? How powerfully, and in the true authority of God, did he preach among them? What mighty works did he shew? And yet they could not believe. Why so? The enemy had entered them with his temptations, had got somewhat into their minds of a contrary nature, to keep out thereby the sense, knowledge, and acknowledgment of him. So that when their hearts were even overcome with his power and sweet precious doctrine, and ready to yield that this was he, this was the Christ indeed, then the enemy raised up some argument or other to prejudice them against him, that he might thereby beat them off, and drive them back again from owning or receiving him. *This man is not of God, say some; for he keepeth not the sabbath.* He cannot be a prophet, say others, because *he is of Galilee, out of which no prophet ariseth.* He cannot be Christ, saith a third sort, because *we know whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.* He is not holy, strict, and zealous, according to the law, say others; but a loose person, *a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber; a friend of publicans and sinners;* one who teacheth not his disciples to fast and pray (as the Pharisees did theirs, and John, who was generally looked upon as a prophet, did his), but justifieth them in plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, and so thereby rather encouraging them to break it, than strictly to observe and keep it according to God's law. He is a *blasphemer*, say some (speaks most horrid blasphemy) *making himself equal with God.* He reproacheth the most strict and zealous men that we have (even our teachers and interpreters of the law and prophets) calling them *hypocrites, painted sepulchres, blind guides, &c.* and pronounceth woe upon woe against them. And those that are the children of Abraham he calls the children of the devil; and saith, *He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin; but if the Son* (meaning himself) *make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* And if we will have life in us, we must believe in him, and eat his flesh, and drink his blood. (Did ever Moses, or any of the prophets, teach such doctrine?) Again, he saith, *If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death;* whereas Abraham and the prophets (who believed God, and kept his sayings) are all dead. This made them even conclude he had a devil, *John viii. 52.* So how could they understand him when he said, he was *the good shepherd, and the door, &c.* and *that all that ever came before him were thieves and robbers;* would they not look upon this as witnessing of himself, and endeavouring to set up himself? And when he said, *Verily, verily, before Abraham was, I am;* were they not ready to stone him, for speaking a false and impossible thing, as it seemed to them; he manifestly being not yet fifty years old? But suppose it to be true that he was before Abraham, how then could he be the Messiah, who was to come of Abraham, and out of the loins of David, according to the scriptures? And then for his miracles, having beforehand concluded that he was a bad man, a sinner, a breaker of the sabbath, a blasphemer, a deceiver of the people, &c. how easy was it for them to harden themselves against them,

and

and to infer that he wrought not these things by the power of God, but by the aid and assistance of the devil, to overthrow the laws and ordinances of Moses, and to set up himself and his new doctrine by? Indeed many (and some seemingly strong and unanswerable) were the exceptions which the wisdom and understanding in them (which was out of the life and power of truth) formed against Christ, whereby they justified themselves in their refusal of him, who was sealed and sent of the Father, and so excluded themselves the kingdom, and the righteousness thereof.

This is past, and they can condemn them now, who themselves are acting over again the same thing in spirit. It pleaseth the Lord thus to suffer things to be, still so to give forth the dispensations of his life, as they alone that are in some measure of his life can discern them. And the same spirit (under a new guise) still opposeth truth in its present appearance and dispensation, and stirreth men up to slight and blaspheme that holy name and power, which they that believe in are saved and sanctified by. Well, what shall I say to you? Oh! that ye could discern spirits! Oh! that ye could see what spirit ye are of, and whom ye serve, in opposing the present dispensation of life! Oh! that ye could see how ye read scriptures out of that which wrote them, and bend them against that which wrote them, making yourselves wise and strong in a wrong wisdom and knowledge against the Lord, and against his Christ, whom he hath set upon his holy hill of Sion, and who appeareth there, though you see it not. For Sion is not now literal, or after the flesh (the day is come, the shadows are gone); but Sion is the holy hill of God in Spirit, upon which the heavenly Jerusalem was built, which is revealed, come down, and coming down from heaven, and many of the heavenly citizens dwell there already, and more are coming thither to dwell; for even from the east, west, north, and south, shall the gathering be, to sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom which cannot be shaken; which kingdom was received by the Christians formerly before the apostasy, and is now received again, blessed be his name who lives and reigns in power over all the spirits of darkness and deceit, maintaining his pure life and truth in the hearts of his children, in despite of them all.

But why should you thus err in heart from the pure truth? Why should you not open to him that knocks in his holy power, and in the demonstrations of his Spirit to your conscience? Why should a subtil device of the deceiver be let in and hugged by you, to cause you to thrust him back from your hearts who is the Word of eternal life, and with whom are the words of eternal life? The Lord God discover the deep deceits of the enemy to you, where he captivateth your hearts and understandings, that it may not be always said of you, as it was of the Jews, *he came unto his own, and his own received him not!* But to as many as received him, he gave power in the day of his flesh; and he giveth much more power to them that receive him in spirit (in the day of his Spirit) to become the sons of God. And because they are sons, he poureth out abundantly of his Spirit upon

upon them; and he that hath the Spirit, hath the Son; and he that hath the Son, hath life: but he that hath not the Son (but blasphemeth the appearance and light of his Spirit) hath not life; but is yet in that wisdom and knowledge which is death, and which keeps him dead.

Now the Lord of his tender mercy make you sensible of, and pardon your opposing and resisting, his truth; and also cause the light of life to shine in your hearts, quickening and guiding you thereby out of the land of death and darkness, into the holy land of life; that all that sincerely breathe after truth may (through the faithful travel) come to sit down, dwell, and feed together in it, in the one power, in the one life, in the one Holy Spirit, where is pure rest and peace, perfect joy and satisfaction for evermore. Amen.

Some **Q U E R I E S**

CONCERNING

CHRIST, and his APPEARANCES; his taking upon him our Flesh: As also concerning his Flesh and Blood, and our being formed thereof, and feeding thereon.

Query 1. **W**HETHER there was not a necessity of Christ's taking upon him our flesh, for the redemption of those that had sinned, and the satisfaction of the justice offended?

Query 2. Whether the Father did not accordingly prepare a body for him, to do his will in all things in; and particularly to offer up to him the acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the whole world?

Query 3. Whether it was not necessary, in this respect also, that Christ should take upon him our flesh, that he might have experience of our temptations and infirmities, and become a merciful and faithful high-priest and intercessor for us?

Query 4. Wherein lay the value and worth of his sacrifice, and of all he did? Did it lie chiefly on the thing done, or in the life wherein he did it, in that he did it in the pure faith and obedience to the Father? He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and he through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God?

Query

Query 5. What was he, for whom the Father prepared a body, and who took it up to do the will, and did the will in it? Was he not the arm of God, the power of God, the Saviour and salvation of God, the Jesus and Christ of God?

Query 6. To whom do the names and titles Jesus and Christ chiefly and in the first place belong? Do they belong to the body which was taken by him, or to him who took the body? The body hath its nature and properties, and the eternal Word, or Son of God (the pure spotless Lamb, the fountain of innocency) its nature and properties. Now the query is, which was the appointed Saviour of the Father? Which was the anointed of the Father, chiefly, and in the first place? Whether the body prepared, or he for whom the body was prepared, to do the will, and offer up the acceptable sacrifice in?

Query 7. Which is Christ's flesh and blood which we are to partake of, whereof we are to be formed, which we are to eat and drink, and which is meat and drink indeed, nourishing to life everlasting? Is it the flesh and blood of the body, which was prepared for, and taken by him, wherein he tabernacled and appeared? Or is it the flesh and blood of him, who took, tabernacled, and appeared in the body? For that which he took upon him was our garment, even the flesh and blood of our nature, which is of an earthly perishing nature; but he is of an eternal nature, and his flesh, and blood, and bones are of his nature. Now as the life and nature which is begotten in his, is spiritual; so that which feeds, and is the nourishment of it, must needs be of a spiritual and eternal nature.

Query 8. What is the bread which came down from heaven? Is not the bread and the flesh all one? Outwardly visible flesh and blood was not in heaven, nor came down from heaven; but the bread of life did come down from heaven, which the heavenly birth feeds on and lives by. For that which redeems, that which is Jesus (the Saviour) came down from heaven, and took upon him a body of flesh here on earth, in which he manifested himself as king, priest, and prophet, and did the work appointed him by the Father, *John xvii. 1, &c.*

Query 9. What was that which saved people outwardly from their outward infirmities and diseases, while Christ was on earth in that body? Was it the body, or the life, power, and Spirit of the Father within the body, and manifest through the body? And can any thing less save inwardly? Now that which saves, that which hath the virtue and power of salvation in it, that the eye of faith is to fix upon, and not to stick or stop in that through which the life works it.

Query 10. Who was he that humbled himself, that made himself of no reputation, that took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion (or habit) as a man? Was it the body of flesh, or was it he that was glorified of the Father before the world was? And who is to have the honour and exaltation? At whose name is every knee

to

to bow? Is not the reward to him who laid down his glory to take upon him the body of flesh, and appear in it, that he might honour, glorify and fulfill the will of his Father?

Query 11. Are not the children and he of one? Are not he and they of the same stock? (*Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one*, Heb. ii. 11.) Is it not from thence that he is not ashamed to call them brethren, even because he finds the nature, Spirit, and life of his Father in them? What makes a child to God? Is it not the being begotten of the Father, and born of the Spirit? And that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. Now mark: have we the denomination and relation with Christ from that which is spiritual, and hath Christ himself the name from or because of the body of flesh? Nay, nay; the name Christ was from the anointing which was in the body, which ran into and filled the vessel. It is true, the body, in and by the union, partakes with him of his name; but the name belongs chiefly and most properly to the treasure in the vessel.

Query 12. What is it to put on Christ, or what is the putting on of Christ? Is it the putting on of that body of flesh? Or the putting on a belief concerning him, according to what is said of him in scripture? Or is it not rather a putting on of his nature, his seed, his Spirit, his life, wherewith the souls of those that are born from above are clothed, as the body is with a garment?

Query 13. Who was it that said, I am the resurrection and the life? Was it not Christ? And what did he say it concerning? Did he say it concerning the body, or did he say it concerning the power and virtue of the Father which was in the body? Did he not say it concerning that which had the power of life in it before it took up the body, and had also the power of life while it was in the body? yea, and could raise up not only other bodies, but that also after it had laid it down? For after it was laid in the grave, he could raise it up, and take it on again, as well as he did at first, when it was first prepared, *John x. 17, 18.*

Query 14. If I, or any one else, have felt the saving arm of the Lord revealed in us; if we have felt a measure of the same life, power, and anointing revealed in our vessels as was revealed in his, is it not of the same nature? Is it not the same thing? Is not Christ the seed? And is not this seed sown in the heart? Now if this seed spring and grow up in me into a spiritual shape or form (though it be but of a babe), is not Christ then formed in me? If I be ingrafted into, and grow up in it, am I not ingrafted into Christ (the true olive-tree, the true vine) and do I not grow up in him? And is not this the same Christ that took upon him the body of flesh, and offered it without the gates of Jerusalem? Is there any more than one, or is there any other than he? Is Christ divided? Is there one Christ within, and another without? He that knoweth the least measure of the thing, doth he not know the thing in some measure? And he that is in the least measure of the thing, is he not in the thing? He that knoweth the Son, doth

he not know the Father? And he that knoweth the Spirit, doth he not also know the Son? And he that is in the Spirit, is he not in the Son? For they are one nature and being. A man may have notions of the one, and not of the other; but their nature, their being, their life, their virtue is inseparable. And as Christ said concerning the Father, That he was in the Father, and the Father in him; and that he that saw him, saw the Father; so may it not be as truly affirmed (in the true sense and understanding of life) concerning Christ, that he is in the Spirit, and the Spirit in him; and that he that seeth the Spirit, seeth him; and he that seeth him seeth the Spirit? For he is the Spirit, according to that scripture, *2 Cor. iii. 17. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* What to do? Why, to see and read within the veil, and to behold the glory of the Lord, which is revealed there; which they whom the veil was over formerly, or whom the veil is over now, have not liberty to do. Here is confusion and impossibility to man's wisdom; that Christ should be all one with the Spirit; that Christ should send the Spirit in his name, and also himself be the Spirit whom he sends. (This is an hard saying, who can bear it?) And yet this confusion to man, is God's wisdom, and precious in their eye who are taught of him.

For it is one and the same Christ that was signified in types and shadows under the law, revealed in the fulness of time in that prepared body, and afterwards in Spirit. Now after he was ascended, he received the Spirit so as he had not received him before; and so having received the promise of the Father, he so dispenseth the Spirit to his brethren and disciples, as it had not been dispensed before. Indeed he comforted and refreshed his people under the law by his Holy Spirit, which was their instructor then, *Neb. ix. 20.* and taught them the things of God under types, shadows, and resemblances. When he came in the body, he chose out disciples, whom he taught the things of the kingdom, and was a refresher and comforter of them therein. And was not this another comforter than those had under the law? Had the Jews before ever any such comforter, as Christ was to his disciples in his bodily presence? Now when he ascends, he receives the Spirit from the Father, as the Father had promised him; and having so received him, he sends him to them for their comforter. And may not this justly be termed another comforter than Christ was in his bodily presence? And yet is it not also the same Spirit of life, that had been with them in that body? So that it is another in the way of administration, but the same in substance; even the Word which was from the beginning, the Spirit which was from everlasting; and to everlasting there is no other.

Now as the Father sent the Son, and yet was with and in the Son; so the Son sending the Spirit, he also is with and in the Spirit. And as it is the Father's will, that the same honour be given to the Son as is given to him; so it is the Son's pleasure, that the same honour be given to his Spirit as is given to him. Yea, as he that will worship the Father, must worship

ship the Son, must come to him in the Son, must appear before him in the Son, must reverence and kiss the Son; so he that will come to Christ, will worship him, must come to him in the Spirit, must bow to him in the Spirit. Yea, he that will know and worship Christ in his fulness (in the majesty of his glory, dominion, and power), must learn to bow at the lowest appearance of his light and Spirit, even at the very feet of Jesus, for that is the lowest part of the body.

Query 15. Did not the bridegroom go away, as to his appearance in flesh, that he might come again in Spirit? Did not the apostles, who knew his appearance in flesh, and his tabernacling among them, know also afterwards his appearance in Spirit, and his tabernacling in them? And were not their hearts filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, because of the presence of the bridegroom? Did they not know the man-child born and brought forth in Spirit, as really as ever he was born and brought forth in flesh? Yea, did they not travail and help to bring him forth? Were there not many in that day, who could say concerning the spiritual and inward appearance of the bridegroom, We know that the Son of God, the eternal life, the pure power and wisdom of the Father, is come? Did they not receive from him the understanding which he gives in and by his coming? Yea, were they not in him that is true, even in Jesus Christ the Son, who is the true God, and life eternal? (1 John v. 20.) Had they not received the kingdom which could not be shaken? And did they never see and converse with the King in the kingdom? Nay, did not he walk in them and they in him, and he sup with them and they with him, in the kingdom? Oh! that ye could read in Spirit! Oh! that ye did receive that measure of life from Christ, which the Father hath allotted you, that ye might read therein; but the letter (read out of the Spirit) darkeneth and killeth.

Query 16. What is the laver of regeneration, or the water wherewith the soul is washed, and whereof a man is born again? Is it outward or inward? Is it the water which ran out of the side of the natural body, when it was pierced with a spear? Or the water which springs from the fountain of life, the water which floweth from the Spirit? What are the waters which corrupt, mud, and defile the mind? Are they outward waters? And what are the waters which purify and cleanse it? Can they be of a lower nature than spiritual? What are the waters which answer the thirst of the soul after life, after purity, after salvation; that refresh and glad the heart of him that drinketh thereof? Are they not from the pure river, clear as chrystal, which runs from the throne? And if the water which cleanseth and nourisheth the soul be spiritual; can the flesh and blood (which falleth not short of the water in its virtues, properties, and operations) be inferior to it in nature and kind?

Query 17. Can outward blood cleanse the conscience? Ye that are spiritual consider. Can outward water wash the soul clean? Ye that have ever felt the blood of sprinkling from the Lord upon your consciences, and your

consciences cleansed thereby; did ye ever feel it to be outward? It is one thing what a man apprehends (in the way of notion) from the letter concerning the things of God, and another thing what a man feels in Spirit.

Query 18. Seeing the apostle speaks of purifying the heavenly things themselves, *Hebr. ix. 23.* it would seriously be inquired into, and the Lord waited on, to know what nature these sacrifices must be of, which cleanse the heavenly things? Whether they must not of necessity be heavenly? If so, then whether was it the flesh and blood of the veil, or the flesh and blood within the veil? Whether was it the flesh and blood of the outward earthly nature, or the flesh and blood of the inward spiritual nature? Whether was it the flesh and blood which Christ took of the first Adam's nature, or the flesh and blood of the second Adam's nature?

Query 19. What is that, wherein they that are in the Spirit, behold as in a glass, with open face, the glory of the Lord? Is it not Christ? And how is Christ so? Is it not as he is made manifest in Spirit? Doth he know Christ aright, or believe in him aright, that knoweth him according to his bodily appearance (that can relate, and firmly believe, what he did therein) or he that knoweth and believeth in his Spirit and power? Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; no not Christ (saith the apostle), though we have known him so. What meaneth that? The same thing may be known several ways: outwardly, inwardly; according to the *flesh*, according to the *Spirit*. Now, if ye are of the Spirit, live in the Spirit; if ye live in the Spirit, know in the Spirit the things of God after the Spirit, as the Spirit reveals, as that which is born of God receives; and not as the wisdom, understanding, reason, and flesh of man can receive; and then ye will come into fellowship with Christ, both in his death and resurrection, and know indeed the resurrection both of the life and of the body: which to know, and be able to acknowledge in Jesus, is very precious.

Query 20. Hath not Christ made us kings and priests to God, even his Father? What is it that is the king and priest in us? And if we be priests, must we not have somewhat to offer? What have we to offer? And what makes our sacrifices savoury and acceptable? Is it not that of his Spirit, that of his life, which is in them? Is it not the faith, the love, the obedience (which are all of him) wherein they are offered? If we should give our bodies to be burned (in the way of testifying to truth), without this would they be accepted? If we give but a cup of cold water in this, is it not accepted?

Now, is the life, the faith, the obedience of the Son, the thing which is of value in us? And was it not the same which was of value in him? What did the Father require of the Son, for satisfaction for Adam's disobedience? Was it not the obedience of the second Adam, which weighed down the transgression and disobedience of the first? Doth not this make all righteous (who are of him, and found in his nature), as the transgression of the first made all unrighteous? *Rom. v. 19.* Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst

wouldst not. Lo I come to do thy will, O God! (He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.) By the which will we are sanctified, thro' the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, *Heb. x. 9, 10.* What can be plainer to that which hath truth's ear? So, by truth manifested in the heart, there is nothing denied of what is said concerning Christ in scripture, but every thing owned, believed, and received in its proper place.

Query 21. Who is the captain of our salvation? Who is it that girdeth himself with might, riding on conquering and to conquer all the enemies of the soul? Is it not the Lamb? Is it not Christ? Is it not he whose name is called the *Word of God*? And yet how can it be he? Is not he to sit at God's right hand, until his enemies be made his footstool?

Query 22. What is the water and Spirit, whereof a man must be born again, or he cannot see the kingdom of God? Is it Christ's flesh and blood or no? His flesh saw no corruption; and incorruptible flesh and blood may enter the kingdom, though corruptible cannot.

Query 23. What did all the types, veils, and shadows under the law signify? Did they signify another veil? Did they signify or shadow out that which was outward? Or did they shadow out and signify that inward life, virtue, and saving power, which was the substance of all?

Query 24. Is not the substance, the life, the anointing called Christ, where-ever it is found? Doth not the name belong to the whole body (and every member in the body) as well as to the head? Are they not all of one; yea, all one in the anointing? Was not this the great desire of his heart to the Father, that they all might be one, even as the Father and Christ were one, *John xvii. 21. 23.* And so being one in the same Spirit (one in the same life, one in the same divine nature, *2 Pet. i. 4.* even partakers of God's holiness, *Heb. xii. 10.*) Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren, *Heb. ii. 11.* nor is the apostle ashamed to give them the name *Christ* together with him, *1 Cor. xii. 12.* The body is the same with the head; one and the same in nature; and doth not the name belong to the nature in the whole? So that the name is not given to the vessel, but to the nature, to the heavenly treasure, to that which is of him in the vessel, to that which the Lord from heaven begets in his own image and likeness, of his own substance, of his own seed, of his own Spirit and pure life.

Query 25. What was that live coal from the altar, whereby the prophet Isaiah's iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged? *Isa. vi. 6, 7.* Can any thing purge away sin, but the blood of Christ?

Query 26. What are the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations? Is not Christ the tree of life? Is there any other tree of life besides him? Is there any other healer? And what do these leaves of the tree of life heal the nations of? Do they not heal them of their sins, and of the sicknesses and distempers of their souls because of their

their sins? And have these leaves any of the blood of Christ in them or no?

Query 27. Is not Christ the true vine, the true olive-tree; the living vine, the living olive-tree; the spiritual vine, the spiritual olive-tree; into which all the spiritually-living are ingrafted? As the Father is the husbandman; so is not the Son the vine? And hath not this spiritual this eternal vine in it juice and sap of an eternal nature? And is not this sap its blood?

Query 28. Is there not a choice vine, to which the foal and ass's colt of the seed of Judah is tied? And are not the garments and clothes of the true Jews washed in the wine, and in the blood of the grapes of this vine? *Gen. xlix. 11.*

Query 29. What is that which the earthly nature slays? And what is the blood which the earthly nature shall disclose, and the slain which it shall no more cover?

Query 30. What are the robes which are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb? And how are they washed and made white therein? And what is the blood (of what nature? earthly or spiritual?) wherein they are washed and made white?

Query 31. What is it to have, or how come we to have, fellowship with Christ in his death, and to suffer and be crucified with him? Is it by having our natural bodies crucified on the same cross of wood (or some such-like one) as his body was crucified on? Or by having the fleshly nature crucified, subdued, and worn out of our souls, minds, spirits, &c. by the power of the Spirit? *Rom. viii. 13.* Now if the flesh we are to put off, be of such a nature and kind; to wit, inwardly and spiritually corrupt; must not the flesh of Christ, which we are to put on instead thereof, be of as deep, inward, and spiritual a nature? What is the flesh whereof we are to be unclothed, before we can be clothed with Christ? Is it outward or bodily? And what is Christ's flesh we are to put on? Is that any more outward or bodily, than that which we are to put off?

Query 32. Is not the flesh and blood, which they that have eternal life feed on, and which nourisheth them up to life eternal (they continuing to feed thereon, and not feeding afterwards on strange flesh, and strange blood); I say, is not this flesh and blood Spirit and life? For that is it which profiteth, *John vi. 63.* Is it not the flesh and blood of the word? Was not the word made flesh? And did not the word, who was made flesh, dwell and appear in a tabernacle of flesh, and cause the glory of his own divine flesh, to shine through that earthly flesh? Oh! read and consider, that ye who have stumbled and murmured against the truth, may stumble or murmur no more, but now at length receive the pure and precious doctrine thereof (and so come to witness the fulfilling of that promise, *Isa. xxix. 18.—24.*), and praise him who giveth understanding.

Query

Query 33. Is not the true church, flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone? Is not the false, or antichristian church, flesh of antichrist's flesh, and bone of antichrist's bone? What is the flesh of the spiritual whore, which is to be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Shall ever the church, which is of Christ's flesh, be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Nay, doth not his flesh make able to abide the devouring fire, and to dwell with the everlasting burnings?

Query 34. What is the pure milk of the word, which is milked out to the babes from the pure breast? And what is the breast from which it is milked out? Is it of the flesh of Christ or no?

Query 35. Are not the wicked of the seed and flesh of the serpent? Is not that the body of flesh, of sin, of death, which is to be put off? And are not they who are renewed in spirit, of the seed and flesh of Christ? Is not that the body or garment of holiness, of righteousness, of life, which is to be put on?

Query 36. Is it not as necessary that the eternal word be made flesh inwardly, that so the children may feed on him, as it was for him to take on him an outward body of flesh, to suffer and die for them, and to fulfil all righteousness, both of the law of the letter, and of the law of the Spirit in?

Query 37. Is there not that which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt? And do not they which dwell there, instead of eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, put his flesh to pain, crucifying it in and to themselves, trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing? Read the figure. Did not outward Israel suffer in outward Egypt? Did not just Lot suffer in Sodom? Doth not the spiritual seed suffer in and by spiritual Egypt? Doth not the flesh of the holy and just one suffer in and by spiritual Sodom?

Query 38. What is that which the Gentile-Christians, who are not Jews inward, circumcised in heart and spirit, who know not the inward temple (the place of the true Jews worship, where they worship the Father in Spirit and truth), but only worship in the outward court, which God hath cast off, and left out of his measure, *Rev. xi. 2.* I say, What is that holy city which these Gentiles tread under foot forty-two months? Is it the church, which is of the flesh and bones of Christ, or no?

He that knoweth the substance, the seed of the kingdom, the birth of the Spirit, knoweth the flesh and blood which is of the seed. And this flesh is flesh indeed, this blood is blood indeed, even the flesh and blood of the seed's nature; but the other was but the flesh and blood of our nature, which he honoured in taking upon him, in which he did the will, in which he offered up the acceptable sacrifice; but yet did not give the honour from his own flesh and blood to it. For the flesh and blood of our nature, was not his own naturally, but only as he pleased to take it upon him and make it his. But that whereof he formeth us (and which he giveth us to

eat

eat and drink), is the flesh and blood of his own nature; and this was it wherein was the virtue, and wherein is the virtue, life, and power for ever. Happy! oh! happy is he who is of it, who is taken out of and formed of him (as Eve was of Adam), and so becomes flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone. Then will he know the mystery of life, feed on the thing itself, and not stumble about appearances and expressions, as those that are out of and from the thing itself do, through the darkness of their mind, and because of their ignorance of the thing spoken of in the scriptures.

**An Incitation to PROFESSORS seriously to consider,
Whether they or we fail, in the true Acknowledg-
ment and Owing of the CHRIST which died at
JERUSALEM.**

WE, who are commonly called QUAKERS, being a people whom the Lord hath gathered (out of the wanderings, out of the many professions, out of the several scattered estates and conditions, wherein his eye pitied us, and his love found us out) into a measure of the eternal rest; where we have found that life, that power, that manifestation of the eternal Spirit, and that redeeming virtue, which we never were before distinctly acquainted with; I say, having tasted of this, having known this, having felt this, and come to a real enjoyment of it, in some degree, in our several measures; we could not possibly conceal this treasure, but in bowels of love (and in the movings of the life and power of the Spirit) have been drawn to testify of it to them who are left behind, groveling under the burthen of corruption, and crying out because of the sin and bondage from the powers of darkness, who have in a mist withheld their eyes from beholding that living virtue, which is able to save (and doth save, blessed be his name) therefrom.

Now this we have often found; That this our testimony hath not been received in the same Spirit and love wherein it hath gone forth; but the enemy (by his subtilty) hath raised up jealousies concerning us, and prejudices against us, as if we denied the scriptures and ordinances of God, and that Christ that died at Jerusalem; professing him only in words (to win upon others by), but denying him in reality and substance.

To clear this latter (for my heart is only at this present drawn out concerning that), we have solemnly professed, in the sight of the Lord God (who hath given us the knowledge of his Son in life and power) these two things.

First,

First, That we do really in our hearts own that Christ, who came in the fulness of time, in that prepared body, to do the Father's will (his coming into the world, doctrine, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, &c.) in plainness and simplicity of heart, according as it is expressed in the letter of the scriptures.

Secondly, That we own no other Christ than that, nor hold forth no other thing for Christ, but him who then appeared, and was made manifest in flesh.

Now it would be nakedly enquired into by professors, what is the reason that their jealousies still remain concerning us, and why they are still so ready to cast this upon us? Certainly if they did know and own the same thing with us (in the Spirit, and in the power, in the life, and in the love, which is of the truth) this prejudice and these hard thoughts could not remain. But if they themselves do not know Christ in the Spirit (but only according to a relation of the letter) no marvel though they miss both of the Spirit, and of the true intent and meaning of the letter; and likewise be liable to clash against the truth, as it is made manifest in others.

And indeed the Lord hath shewn me in Spirit several times, that they themselves are guilty of that very charge (and that he will so implead them at his judgment-seat) which they cast upon us, even of denying that Christ which died at Jerusalem to be the Christ. For he that owneth the words of scripture, as he apprehends or conceives them in the reasonings of his mind, and doth not wait to have them revealed in the Spirit, keeping out of his own reasonings and conceivings, and waiting patiently till the Lord open the thing in the Spirit, he setteth up his own conceivings, or an image in his mind, of the mind of the Spirit, but misseth of the thing itself, which alone is known in the Spirit, by them who wait upon the Spirit, there to receive it, and are not hasty to set up their own reasonings and imaginations concerning the thing in the mean time.

No man can in truth call Jesus the Lord but by the Spirit. But any man that is any thing serious, and weighs the scriptures in the natural part, may so learn to acknowledge his coming into the world, and that he is Lord and king, &c. and may thus call him Lord, yea, and kindle a great heat in his affections towards him; but all this (out of the life, out of the Spirit) is but man's image, which he forms in his mind, in his reading the scriptures, and observing things therefrom. But the true calling Jesus Lord, is from the feeling of his eternal virtue in the Spirit, and finding the scriptures opened to him by the Spirit, in a principle which is above the reason, comprehends the reason, and confounds and brings it to nothing.

Again; there is no true knowledge of Christ, no living knowledge, no saving knowledge, no knowledge which hath the eternal virtue in it; but that which is received and retained in a measure of light given by God to the creature, in the faith which is the gift, in the grace which is supernatural and spiritual; whereas the reasoning part is but natural. And such as have received the

spiritual understanding, know it to be distinct from the natural; and we experimentally find a very clear distinction, between scriptures searched out by the reasonings of the mind (and so practices drawn therefrom) and scriptures opened by the Spirit, and felt in the life.

Now that professors generally have not received their knowledge of Christ from the Spirit, or from scriptures opened in the Spirit (and so know not the thing, but only such a relation of the thing as man's reasoning part may drink in from the letter of the scriptures) is manifest by this, in that they are not able in spirit and understanding to distinguish the thing itself from the garment wherewith it was clothed, though the scriptures be very express therein. Speak of Christ according to a relation of the letter, there they can say somewhat; but come to the substance, come to the spirit of the thing, come to the thing itself, there they stutter and stammer, and shew plainly that they know not what it is.

Now the scriptures do expressly distinguish between Christ and the garment which he wore; between him that came, and the body in which he came; between the substance which was veiled, and the veil which veiled it. *Lo! I come; a body hast thou prepared me.* There is plainly he, and the body in which he came. There was the outward vessel, and the inward life. This we certainly know, and can never call the bodily garment Christ, but that which appeared and dwelt in the body. Now if ye indeed know the Christ of God, tell us plainly what that is which appeared in the body? Whether that was not the Christ before it took up the body, after it took up the body, and for ever?

And then their confining of Christ to that body, plainly manifesteth that they want the knowledge of him in spirit. For Christ is the Son of the Father; he is the infinite eternal being, One with the Father, and with the Spirit, and cannot be divided from either; cannot be any-where where they are not, nor can be excluded from any place where they are. He may take up a body, and appear in it; but cannot be confined to be no-where else but there; no, not at the very time while he is there. Christ, while he was here on earth, yet was not excluded from being in heaven with the Father at the very same time; as he himself said concerning himself, *The Son of man, which is in heaven*, John iii. 13. Nor was the Father excluded from being with him in the body; but the Father was in him, and he in the Father: whereupon he said to Philip, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*. What! did every one that saw that body, see the Father also? Nay, not so; but he that saw Christ, the Son of the living God, whom flesh and blood revealed not, but the Father only (*Matt. xvi. 16, 17.*) he saw the Father also.

O Friends! look to your knowledge of Christ, and to your faith and knowledge of the scriptures, and to your prayers also; for it is easy missing of the living substance in all these, and meeting with a shadow; which may please and make a great shew in the earthly part, in the natural understanding and affections,

affections, but satisfieth not the soul, or that which is born after the Spirit, but still the cry there goes out (where the soul is awakened) after truth, substance, life, virtue from God's Spirit in the spirit, which it alone can feed upon.

These four things following I am certain of; which he that cometh into the true light, shall infallibly experience them there.

First, That nothing can save but the knowledge of Christ, even of that very Christ, and no other, who took upon him the prepared body, and offered it up at Jerusalem.

Secondly, That no knowledge of Christ can save but the living knowledge. Not a knowledge of him after the letter (which the carnal part may get much of, and value itself much by), but a knowledge of him in the Spirit; which is only given to that which is begotten and born of the Spirit, and only retained by that which abides and remains in the Spirit, and runs not out into the fleshly reasonings, imaginings, and conceivings, about the things mentioned in the scriptures.

Thirdly, That that man who knoweth not Christ in spirit, nor keepeth close to him in spirit; but (through darkness and misguidance of the spirit of deceit) calleth the shinings of his light (his reproofs, his checks for that which is evil, and his secret motions to that which is good) natural; this man, though he seem to own Christ ever so much according to the letter, yet in truth denies him.

Fourthly, He that denies Christ (in his knockings and visitations of him in his own heart, and before men in the truths which he holds forth by his servants and ministers of his Spirit) him will he deny before his Father in heaven.

Oh! I beseech you do not trifle about these things (for they are exceeding weighty) lest ye perish from the way! For missing of the Saviour, ye must needs also miss of the salvation. Oh! that ye knew your state, as God knows it to be, and as it is certainly known and felt, in the measure of his life and Holy Spirit, by those which God hath gathered thither, and whose eyes he hath opened, and preserveth open there; glory be to his name therefore: yea, glory, glory, glory, and everlasting praises be sung to him throughout all the holy land; yea, in the very heights of Sion, by the souls of the redeemed, from henceforth and for evermore, Amen: whose mercy, love, grace, wisdom, power, and rich goodness remaineth and endureth for ever; by and in which the redeemed live to his praise; who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, whose blood they know what it is, and none else knoweth it, but they who feel the sprinkling and virtue of it. Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and how can we but be glad, and rejoice in his salvation! Oh! let all that live by the breath of thy power, and drink of thy streams, sing praise unto thee, and exalt thy great and wonderful name for ever and ever.

Some PROPOSITIONS and CONSIDERATIONS concerning
the Nature of Church-Worships and Ordinances since
the Days of the Apostles, for the sake of the Simpli-
city which hath been long held captive therein.

HE that would know the true state of the church, and ordinances thereof, must wait upon God in fear and humility of heart, who alone is able to give the true knowledge and understanding of these things. And he that cometh to the Spirit, waiteth in the Spirit, and receiveth the true light from the Spirit, he shall be able to measure ages and generations past as with a span, and see clearly (in that light) how things were before the apostasy, how while the church was in the wilderness, and how things shall be again after the apostasy, when the church cometh out of the wilderness. She herself is the same in all; but her state is different, according to the wisdom and good pleasure of him who variously disposeth of her. One while she is clothed, appearing in the beauty and glorious dress which the Lord had put upon her. Another while she is stripped of her outward garments, and the harlot dressed therewith, and appearing therein. After which season she is adorned again as gloriously (if not more gloriously) than before; but whether ever she appears more in those garments wherein the harlot had been dressed, and wherein she had long appeared (even all the time of the apostasy) the Lord would be inquired of, and waited on to know. Now to help the tender and upright hearts towards the true sense of these things, the Propositions and Considerations following are given forth, which he that sincerely waiteth on the Lord, from him may receive the true understanding and right acknowledgment of.

1. That upon the coming of Christ, and the change of that outward covenant, the distinction between the outward Jew and Gentile fell, they becoming all one, as in relation to Christ; and then another distinction arose in relation to the faith, believers becoming Jews now, and unbelievers Gentiles.

2. That these true and inward Jews had not only the inward faith, the life, the power, the Spirit; but also a ministry, ordinances, and gifts of the Spirit relating to their present state.

3. That there was a time, after a long and sharp fight between the true ministers, who appeared in the true light and power of the true Spirit, and the false ministers, who also appeared as ministers of righteousness, and as in the power of the Spirit, but were not such indeed, but instructed by Satan to transform themselves into a resemblance and likeness of ministers of righteousness:

righteousness: for though they said they were apostles, and seemed so in appearance; yet their spirit (being tried) was found not to be the Spirit of the apostles: I say, there was a time, when there was a division (or separation) made, between the inward temple and the outward court.

4. That when this division was made, the outward court was given to the Gentiles; not any longer reserved by God for the true worshippers, who worship in Spirit and truth; but given to the unbelievers, the worshippers out of the true faith, the worshippers out of the Spirit, and out of the life.

5. That henceforward (since this separation) the believers, or true Jews, are not to be expected in the outward court (in the worship thereof, wherein they were found before this separation), but the unbelievers, the Gentiles (who have not the true nature, but at best but the appearance of the Jew) are to be expected there, and the true Jew is to be looked for and found more inward.

6. That therefore which allureth to look for God there, and to wait for him in the ways and worships of this time of the separation, is not the true Spirit (which rightly guideth the simple heart to the place where God appears, and where he is to be waited for); but the wrong spirit, who, when he cannot stifle the simplicity, and hinder it from breathing and seeking after God, waits to draw aside and mislead it.

7. That the great way of that spirit's misguiding and misleading the honest heart, in its breathing and longing state, is not by a direct taking it off from seeking after God; but rather by pointing it to a way to seek him in, wherein he once appeared, and was enjoyed, but is now withdrawn from.

8. He that will keep close to God, and not be withdrawn from him, must watch to his Spirit, and know the leadings of it, else he will not follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes; but stay behind in some observation or practice which the Lamb is gone out of; and so miss of his leader, and meet (instead thereof) with another leader, even the spirit of antichrist, who enters into the outward court, and outward practices, so soon as ever the Spirit of God hath left them.

9. That God's people, since his withdrawing inward, and giving the outward court to the Gentiles, have been much deceived by the antichristian spirit, and led captive into Babylon; insomuch as God, when he cometh to overthrow antichrist, with the Babylon of his building, finds them there, and calls them out from thence. For the light growing low, and the deceit great, and the spirit subtil; how can the poor, weak, innocent babe espy that spirit, and escape his snares, when he tempts to those very paths and ways of worship wherein the saints had walked and met with God, before the Spirit of the Lord departed out of them and gave them up to the Gentiles?

10. That there is danger to the people of God of not understanding his call out of Babylon, but abiding there, through the subtil entanglements of the

the false spirit, who bewitcheth (with the cup of fornication) to make Babylon appear as Sion, her doctrines as the truths of the gospel, her ordinances and ways of worship as the true ordinances and ways of worship. For the deceit is exceeding deep, and the mystery of iniquity very great, following the heart close which the Lord is drawing to depart therefrom; and if the Lord God is not strong and vigilant, who judgeth the whore, she would still keep her hold of the heart; and if the heart be not kept very close to the Lord in the judgment, it cannot come out of Babylon, but will still be entangled and held in some part or other of the mystery of its deceit.

II. Such of the people of God as do not wait to understand and receive the full call, and so do not follow the Lord perfectly out of that city of abominations; but by her subtilties, and inward and outward withcrafts, are held captive therein, and found in any part thereof when the Lord cometh to judge her; such must partake of the plagues from the hand of the Lord, who will not spare her, nor the spirits of his dearest people who are found there, in the day of his visitation and righteous judgments.

Therefore come out of her, come out of her, O ye that love your souls, and the pure presence and fresh light of God's countenance! Ye that know what it is to provoke him to jealousy, and fear the weight of his hand upon your spirits; ye that love the holy land, the holy city, and temple of the living God, oh! come out of that impure building, that fleshly building, those fleshly ways and worships which that spirit adorneth, to make them appear as if they were spiritual. Oh! depart ye, depart ye, out of your new removes; for they are also polluted, and not your rest; but short of that wherein the rest, the peace, the presence of the Lord of life is felt by others, and to be found by you.

And consider this, if ever ye will come to the holy city, which was once built in the days of the apostles, but (since the division of it from the outward court) hath been trodden down, and trampled under the feet of the unbelievers, even while they have been worshipping in the outward court (which God once built and chose, but afterwards withdrew his Spirit from, and gave up to the unbelievers; I say, if ever you will come to this holy city, the holy land wherein it is built, and the holy hill whereon it was founded, ye must pass through the wilderness, be exercised in the wilderness, even till ye are fitted for it; and not strive to raise up a building yourselves in the likeness of it; but wait till God hath hewn and prepared the stones by his Spirit, and then (by the skill of the Spirit) build up his Sion again.

Therefore, in the fear of the Lord, consider seriously, meekly, humbly, and brokenly, that the Lord may manifest your present state and condition unto you, whether ye have not erred in these things as well as others, and have not cause to repent of your forwardness herein, and to acknowledge that your buildings have been raised in the forwardness of your own spirits, and in the confidence of your reasonings upon scripture-words, without feeling

ing the presence (guidance and holy power) of God's Spirit raising up the foundation of many generations, and rearing his own pure house upon his own holy mountain.

In the Lord's hand is the time and season of building his own house. David, though his desire was approved, yet might not build the outward temple in the time of his choice; but God's time and season was to be waited for, both for the first building, and for the rebuilding of it. There is likewise a season for the rebuilding of spiritual Sion, after the long captivity it in mystery Babylon. Now he that is forward, building before the time and season of the Spirit, buildeth without the Spirit, and his building is not of the Spirit, but of the nature of Babylon, which is wholly to be departed from, and left behind, in the soul's travels and progress towards Sion: and whatever is of the nature of Babylon, must at length fall with Babylon (in the day of her terrible judgment) if the Lord in mercy do not shake it, and cause it to fall before.

Therefore, O all professors! awake out of the flesh and all fleshly reasonings, into the Spirit of life; and examine there both your inward and outward buildings, that your loss be not great, and your anguish unutterable in the day of the Lord, when all those buildings, which are raised and preserved in the pure life and power, shall shine in the beauty and glory of God's Spirit, and the greatest glory of flesh and fleshly buildings fade and wither.

The Sounding of Bowels towards thee, O ENGLAND!

EARLY in the morning, on the 26th day of the Sixth Month, 1660, this, in the freshness and quick sense of life, sprang up in my heart again and again. O England, England, England! how good had it been for thee, that thou hadst known and walked in the way of peace!

There is a way of peace for persons and nations to know and walk in; but every person and nation doth not know and walk in this way, but rather in the way of trouble.

Quest. What is the way of peace?

Ans. It is the way of the pure wisdom, the way of the light and guidance of God's Spirit, from whom the creature came, and by whom alone it can be rightly ordered. He that waiteth on him for counsel, he that subjecteth to, and walketh in his counsel, he walketh in the way of peace.

Quest. What is the way of trouble?

Ans. The way of a man's own wisdom and counsel. For a man or nation to do that which is right in their own eyes. This is the way of man, whereby he thinks to establish himself, and put an end to his troubles; but he errs therein, as in the end he still finds to his woe.

Now,

Now, O England! consider; hast thou has the guidance of God? Hath the light which hath guided thy steps been lighted by him, or by his and thy soul's enemy? For there is a spirit (of a contrary nature to God) near man, which he suddenly taketh counsel of, when his heart is not acquainted with, nor receiveth counsel of the Lord. And this counsellor is the destroyer both of persons and nations, leading them in ways of ruin and subversion, under an appearance of being the proper ways of peace and settlement.

It is true of nations, as well as persons, that what they sow, that shall they also reap. God measureth out their time unto them, and when that is over, his time of judging and pleading with them comes. And woe is then unto them who have acted in their own wills and wisdoms, out of the pure counsel and fear of the Lord, wherein they should have stood and been guided.

It is a day of trouble and distress. The weight of the iniquity of this nation begins to be felt upon it. Oh! let every one search and bow before the Lord, under his righteous judgments! that there may be no going on in that which bringeth and will increase the judgment; but a turning towards that which intercedes, and opens the springs of mercy.

Two things lie heavy on this nation; to wit, a running on in transgressions of several kinds against the Lord (forgetting his tender mercies, with the days of former distress) and an afflicting others whom he loves, and hath led, and is leading out of transgression. Oh! that these things might come to an end, that the anger of the Lord might cease, and the ways of his judgments and pleading with this nation be stopped; for who can stand before him when he riseth up in controversy against them?

There is but one eye which can rightly see the hand and judgments of the Lord; yea, it pleaseth the Lord so to manage them, that only the eye which is of him may see them. Man must be taken in his wisdom, and caught in the snare of his own understanding. He that will see the things of God, the ways of God, the counsels of God, the love and sweetness of God (yea, the very judgments of God) must receive from him the eye that seeth them. Oh! that men might feel after, and come into, that wherein they might be pitied, and spared by their Maker. Man must bow; that which is of God in man (which hath long lain under oppression) must be exalted. It is the day of his power, and he will reign in it. Oh! happy they that bow to his scepter, and kiss the shinings of his light (even the sharpest rebukes of it in their hearts) that they may turn from, and travel out of, the darkness (where is death, destruction, and misery, even in all the counsels and ways of it), and come into unity with that which is pure, and live.

Written in Aylesbury prison,
27th of 6th month, 1666.

**A faithful Guidance to the Principle and Path of Truth,
wherein eternal Life is witnessed, by those who are
born thereof, and walk therein.**

THERE must be somewhat let down from God into a man's heart, to change his heart, and redeem it to God, or he cannot be saved. He must receive a seed, be born of a new and incorruptible seed, or he cannot be renewed from his corrupt nature and state. He must be born of water and God's Spirit, or he cannot enter into God's kingdom.

Now this is the true religion; namely, to experience and be subject to that power which redeems to God; which breaks the power of the wicked-one in the heart, first casting him out, and then taking possession of the vessel, and filling it with the holy treasure.

Quest. But how may a man meet with such a thing as this?

Ans. The scripture (which gives a faithful testimony concerning the truth) saith, Christ, the Word of faith which the apostles preached, is nigh. Inasmuch as a man need not say, who shall go up or down to fetch it? But what saith it? *The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart.* This is that which reconciles to God, cutting down and slaying the enmity by the power of the cross, and bringing up the seed. This is the adversary in the way of the sinner, which he that maketh peace with shall be remitted all his trespasses past, and find power and strength against sin for the time to come, as he is gathered into, and brought forth in his pure life and nature.

Quest. But how shall I know and receive this?

Ans. That in the heart which is contrary to sin, which discovereth sin, which witnesseth against sin, and is drawing the mind from it, furnishing those with a new and holy ability, who wait upon the Lord in it; that, that is the thing, though in ever so little a seed or low measure. Now he that minds this, hearkens to this, turns from what this (in its pure unerring light) shews to be evil, follows (in the will, strength, and ability which is of this) what this shews to be good, he receives it; and waiting upon it, and becoming daily subject to it, shall grow up in it, increase in the knowledge of it, and acquaintance with it, and receive of it daily more and more. And thus the man whose way was vile, whose heart was naught, formed in wickedness, filled with corruption, daily bringing forth sin and fruits unto death, shall find these (by the pure light, and holy instructions of life) daily purged out of him, and Christ formed in him, and the holy fruits of righteousness brought forth through his vessel, by the power and Spirit of Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

And then being in Christ, being in the principle of his life, and acting therein, here is peace in the soul, rest to it from its enemies and God's judgments, and acceptance with the Father in what the soul thus is and works.

But then the world will persecute and hate exceedingly; because this soul, who thus submits to God, and is thus changed by him, is not of the world, but of the Father, which begat it in Christ, and formeth it in his image and likeness.

Likewise in this light the eyes are opened to read the scriptures, and to understand therein the conditions of the people and saints of the Most High in former generations, and how the wicked spirit wrought then, to oppose the truth and people of God, and to draw men into deceit. Yea, and many other ways the scriptures are exceeding sweet and useful, being read in that which gives the true sense and understanding of them.

But let him that once putteth his hand to the plough (beginning to feel somewhat of God, and to subject unto it, and so to taste of the peace and pureness of it) never look back to the world, nor mind the temptations and oppositions he will meet with from that nature and spirit, either in himself or others; for if he do, he will never be able to travel on, but rather consult with flesh and blood, and so return back into Egypt, and lose the crown which is laid up for those who pass on through the wilderness, through the trials, through the temptations, through the wants, through the various exercises to their journey's end.

This is the path of life in brief; happy is he who feels the guider into it, and faithfully follows him therein to the end.

There is another question springs up in my heart, which is this:

Quest. How may a man come to have his sins washed away by the blood of Christ?

Answ. By coming into the light, and walking in the light, which discovers the blood, and wherein alone it is sprinkled by God, and felt by the soul, he may receive the cleansing which is by it. This is according to the testimony of scripture, as 1 John i. 7. *If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.* By the light the darkness is dispelled, and in the light the corruption and filth is washed away by the blood, and the soul (mind and conscience) cleansed from it.

This then is the message that we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, ver. 5. What then? Why then they that will know God, and walk with God, must by the virtue of his truth be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (as Acts xxvi. 18.); and in that light he shall meet with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and have fellowship with them, ver. 3. and shall be washed (both with the water and with the blood) and kept clean and pure thereby in the sight of God.

Quest.

Quest. But how shall I come into the light, and how may I walk therein?

Answ. Christ is the light. (He is the light of the world, the light of men, the light of life.) And thou needst not say in thine heart, Who shall go up to heaven, or down into the deep, for him? For he is near, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. This is the word of faith, which thou art to believe in, love, and obey; that in the love, faith, and obedience thereof, thine heart may be circumcised, and thou mayest live. This is the gospel of our salvation, even this Christ, this word, this light, this life, which redeems from sin, which destroyeth the destroyer, and setteth the soul free to serve and live to the Lord. This was the message the apostles had to deliver in their day, as *Rom. x. 8.* And this was Moses's message too, when he spake concerning the new covenant. For Moses did not only deliver the old covenant, but he also spake concerning the new, even another covenant than that of Mount Horeb, *Deut. xxix. 1.* And the word of this other covenant was not the law written in tables of stone; but the word nigh in the mouth and heart, *chap. xxx. 14.*

Object. But that place speaks of doing (which is the voice of the old covenant, do this and live); but the new covenant stands in believing.

Answ. The end of faith is obedience. Why do I believe Christ, but that I may receive the law of his Spirit, and walk before him in the newness of the obedience thereof? And he that obeys is of the faith, and in the truth; and he that obeys not, is out of it; is not in the power, not in the life, which brings forth the obedience; so out of the thing which redeems, and in which the redemption is witnessed: but he that obeys, he that doth the will, he is in the righteousness, in the power, in the life, from which the obedience springs.

And here the washing and purifying of the soul is truly known and witnessed. Outward sacrifices under the law were vain, as to cleansing the soul; and an outward belief of what Christ did and suffered, effects not the thing now. What then? The new creature doth; the pure faith doth; the pure obedience doth. It did it formerly, it doth it still, and nothing else can do it. *Bring no more vain oblations; but wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well, &c.* But how should this be? Could they ever attain this by the old covenant? Nay; but Moses had not only delivered them the old covenant, but also had directed them to the new, to the Word of faith, to the Word of life and power in the heart and mouth, through the obedience whereof they might wash themselves (as Peter, even in the gospel times, speaketh, *1 Pet. xxii.*), put away the evil of their doings; cease to do evil, learn to do well, &c. And what then? Why then they should receive the cleansing through the blood of the Lamb; for then, though their sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as snow; though they were red like crimson, they should be as wool, *Isai. i. 16, 17, 18.*

So Micah tells them (when they asked how they might come before God to please him?) *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, Mic. vi. 8.* Where or how doth God shew this to man? Had not Moses told that before; to wit, by the Word nigh in the mouth and heart? There is somewhat near man, even in his mouth, which divides his words one from another, shewing him (at some times, and would do it oftener if he heeded it) which are bad words, and which are good words. What is that that doth this? The same thing also is in his heart, as a discernor of the thoughts and intents thereof, shewing him when there is a good thought, desire, or intention in his mind, and when there is a bad or wicked one. What is this? Oh! that men knew what it is! Oh! that they could fear the Lord, and become subject to it, and they should know what it is!

Every man that will be sanctified, and inherit God's kingdom, must be born of the will of God. He must deny his own will (as Christ did; not my will, said he, Father, but thine be done) that must be crucified. He must suffer in the flesh, die to the flesh, and live in and to the holy nature and Spirit of God.

Now thus a man comes to be born of the pure will; to wit, by hearing the word nigh in the mouth and heart, and becoming subject to it. This cuts down his own will day by day, and brings up the will and nature of God in him, through which he is changed and sanctified, and becomes a new creature. For the old creature is made up of the old understanding and will; but the new creature is made up of the new.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to thy word, saith David. What word was that? Was it the word of the old covenant, or the word nigh in the mouth and heart? And *thy word*, saith he, *is a lanthorn to my feet, and a light to my path.* What word was that, the word of the first covenant, or the word of the second? *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.* What law is that? *The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.* What testimony is that? *The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.* What statutes are they? (Were not the statutes of the old covenant heavy and burdensome?) *The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.* What commandment is that? Yea, what is that which is *sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb*, which overcomes with sweetness? Oh! that men could read! Oh! that men could see the thing which is pure, and maketh pure; which is righteous, and maketh righteous. After men have seen the thing, there is a great way to travel to it; but how far are they off, who do not so much as see it, but are in the darkness and prejudices of that nature and spirit which is contrary to it.

Now if the Lord, in his tender mercy and love to thy soul, bring thee to a sense of this thing, and thou beginnest to feel this precious searching

ng word discovering any evil to thee, either in thy heart or ways, oh! do not dispute, do not reason against it; but bless the discoverer, bow to the Son, become obedient immediately, faithfully following the Lamb therein, lest he remove his light from thee, and suffer darkness and the disputing wisdom to overtake thee.

Christ is not of the world, and he leads out of the world; out of its vanities, ways, customs, fashions, &c. A man cannot serve Christ and the world. Can any man be born of the Father, be begotten by him out of the spirit of the world, and yet live in that, walk in that, which is not of the Father, but of the world; which came from the worldly part, is of the worldly part, nourisheth and pleaseth the worldly part in man, but pleaseth not the Father? Can that man who is not of the world, but of the Father, do any thing that upholdeth the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, either in himself or others? Doth not the Spirit of the Lord, where it is hearkened to, draw out of these, and out of all things which are of these? Therefore consider well what it will cost, and how hard it is to follow Christ; that thou who desirest to be the Lord's, mayest receive help and strength from him to be faithful, that in his strength thou mayest overcome all that stands between thee and life, that so thou mayest receive the crown, and inherit the kingdom which is prepared for, and given to, the faithful, who labour and fight not in vain; but gain ground and conquer (yea, at length become more than conquerors) through the mercy, love, might, and power of the Lord.

Some sensible experimental **QUESTIONS** and **ANSWERS**
from the Tenth Chapter of **JOHN**.

Quest. 1. **W**HO is the good shepherd of the sheep?

Ans. The wisdom, life, and power of the Father (which dwelleth in, and is manifest through, the Son) is the shepherd. He that is the truth, the way, and the life, he also is the shepherd and bishop of the soul.

Quest. 2. *Who are the sheep?*

Ans. They that are born of this wisdom, gathered by this life, turned to this power, they are the sheep. They who are changed by him into his nature, they are of him; sheep of him, the Shepherd; lambs of him, the Lamb; doves of him, the Dove.

Quest. 3. *What is the fold of the sheep?*

Ans. The wisdom, life, and power of the Father, even the same that is the shepherd. The Father's hand wherewith he covers them, wherein he incloseth them, that is the fold. For it is the power, wisdom, and life of the

the Father, which gathereth the sheep, and he gathereth them into his wisdom, into his life, and that is a wall or fold about them.

Object. Is not the church the fold?

Answer. This in the church, or the church in this, is the fold, but not out of this. For there is no safety or preservation among any sort or gathering of people, but as they stand and abide in this. And standing and abiding in this, they have authority and power from the chief bishop of the soul; but none out of this.

Quest. 4. Who is the door?

Answer. The Shepherd is the door also, who lets into the fold, and shuts out, at his pleasure; and none can rightly enter but by him.

Quest. 5. What are they that run before the power, or farther than the power leads and guides them?

Answer. They are thieves and robbers, and they may destroy the life and freshness in those that are not watchful; but they cannot help to save or build up, because they themselves are out of that, come out of that, and act out of that, which alone can do it.

Quest. 6. How may the sheep be discerned from the goats, and from such also as put on the sheep's cloathing, but yet are not sheep in nature and spirit?

Answer. By their lamb-like nature, by the meekness and innocency in them which is of the Lamb, which none can have but they that are of him; for it is not to be found in man's nature, nor to be attained by his art. They also know and hear the voice of the Word nigh in the mouth and heart, and follow the law of his Spirit, received from his mouth, which none else but his sheep do, or can do; for this is given by him, and it is given by him only to his sheep.

Quest. 7. What doth Christ the Shepherd (the eternal Word, the wisdom, life, and power of the Father) do for his sheep?

Answer. He doth great things for them, which who can utter? But happy is he that feels and knows them. He gives them a new nature, a new spirit, a new heart, a new name, which none knoweth but he that hath it; for it is written on the white stone, which none else receives, nor none else can read, but he that hath the eye which is of him, what is written thereon. He giveth them eternal life; he leadeth them into the pastures of life; he giveth them to drink of the waters of life. He putteth them forth out of the prison-house, out of the chains and fetters, out of the darkness, out of the bonds, and from under the burdens of the soul, into the pure light and liberty of the Spirit, where they taste, know, and enjoy of his freedom, and dwell with him, and rest with him, and lie down with him, and rise up with him, even in the same eternal life, Spirit, and power, wherein his dwelling-place is. And all this they enjoy safely, hearkening to the voice of the Shepherd, and turning from the voice of the stranger, which it is natural to them to do. For being turned from man, born of that which is immortal, and keeping to that; that ear which is there received will alone

alone hearken to the voice of him who is immortal; and the voice of the stranger (who speaketh of himself) is presently discerned and turned from, by him that heareth with the true ear. *The Lord God, who is the spring and fountain of all good, inflame people with desires after the pure life, and holy nature, which is of and from Christ the seed, his Son, and satisfy those desires which are singly and uprightly after him.*

THE CONCLUSION.

GLORIOUS was the estate of the church before the apostasy, for purity of doctrine, for holy order and discipline, for love to God, one to another, and to all men (even of enemies) for faith in God, for the presence and power of his Spirit among them (insomuch as the unbeliever coming among them, might find his heart and state reached to, and be forced to confess and report that God was in them of a truth) for singleness and uprightness of heart, meekness and innocency of spirit and conversation, for zeal for God and his truth, suffering the spoiling of their goods, imprisonments, stripes, and many other ways, both from the heathen, and also from the professing Jews, who had been the church once. Oh! what shall I say concerning the beauty and loveliness of that state? Ye that would know it, oh! wait to feel it in that which gives the true sense of it.

But over this glorious state came a dark, thick, corrupt night, wherein the kernel was lost, and the shell defaced; wherein the house, which had been swept and garnished, became again recovered and possessed by the wicked spirit. And how great hath this darkness been! Oh! what a kind of church hath appeared in the world, wherein the spirit of enmity hath dwelt and acted in men, under the name of Christianity! So that instead of loving and seeking the good of enemies, they are ready to rend and tear one another for every little difference, and will be lords over mens faith, requiring men to practise things in religion before the Spirit of the Lord teacheth them so to do, which the apostles did not. For though they had from God the express knowledge of what was truth, and could certainly instruct and build men up therein, yet they were not lords over mens faith; but if men were otherwise-minded than according to what they knew and taught, they could wait and bear with them, bidding them walk so far as they had attained, and God in his due time would reveal the rest also. Oh! that men were come to this spirit again! then they would be Christians indeed, and then they might be known to be Christ's disciples, by their loving the brethren and fellow-disciples. But without this love, mens religion is but a tinkling cymbal, making a noise and sound of somewhat, but not having the true nature or virtue of religion in it.

Now

Now will it not be a glorious day, when the Spirit of the Lord cleanse away this thick darkness, and causeth the light of his pure truth to arise and appear again? Why there is such a day to be, wherein the true church (which was reproached and driven into the wilderness) is to come out of the wilderness again, and her witnesses stand on their feet again, and her seed to spring up in the power of life, following the Lamb, who marcheth on fighting with the sword of the Spirit (the word of his mouth) conquering and to conquer thereby the corrupted antichristian world, even as he did at first the corrupt heathenish world. The Lord will purify his temple, and cleanse the world by the plagues of his angels which he hath prepared, making way for the beauty of his truth, and the church of his gathering; wherein he will bring forth his righteousness, wherein his power shall appear, wherein his presence shall be made manifest, wherein that which shined before in the primitive church, shall shine again in this new-reared building of his, insomuch as men shall be forced to say, *This is the church of Christ indeed, God is here of a truth; this is the Gospel-Jerusalem indeed, which is built upon the holy hill of Sion; in which innocency, righteousness, truth, love, sweetness, peaceableness, and the gentle nature and Spirit of the Lamb lives and reigns; and the Lord bless thee, O habitation of Justice, and mountain of holiness.*

Now of a truth this work is begun. The times of refreshment are come from the presence of the Lord. The Lord hath heard from heaven, pitying the cries of his seed, and hath visited their souls, causing the light of life (even the pure light of the everlasting covenant) to shine upon their tabernacles. But whoever would know these things, and partake of them, must come in at the door, by the guidance of the Spirit, through the light which is with him. And he that would enjoy the full light (even the shinings forth of the sun at noon-day) must begin with its glimmerings, even that in the heart, which discovereth and draweth out of the corrupt state of the world towards the Father. Oh! hear and live. Do not dispute about it, but wait to feel it; upon the feeling of it, despising the shame, and taking up and enduring the cross, and so bearing the reproach and sufferings of Christ in thy age and generation. And as thou obeyest, thou shalt know of its doctrine; but out of the pure faith and obedience, there is no true, sound, deep, rooted knowledge; but all of that kind must be parted with, for the knowledge which is of the faith, and which is made manifest and increased in the obedience; which knowledge is of a far more excellent kind and nature, than that which thou art to part with for it. The Lord guide thy mind, and stretch forth his hand to help thee, who from the least touch of a true nature and spirit, desirest after the pure truth and way of eternal life. Amen.

This testimony (here held forth) is faithful and true, and (I know) the witness of God in many hearts will answer to it; and happy is he that maketh a right use of it. For, so doing, his soul will not fall short of the pure living truth, nor set up any thing else for truth which is not.

To such as are not satisfied with a Profession, without the true Life and Power, but have sincere Desires in their Hearts after the LORD himself, and a Willingness to be acquainted with his pure living Truth, and with the Soul's true Guide and Leader; this Experience is in my Heart to express unto you, which we have all along witnessed in our Travels out of the dark corrupt Land, into the Land of Life and Purity.

WE have still found the willer, the runner, the self-striver, the wise comprehending part, &c. left behind; and the grace of God alone able to lead towards him, and the birth which is of and by grace still to obtain the mercy. And Christ is our life, and in the union with his Spirit lies all our ability and strength; and that knowledge of Christ, which we witness to be life eternal, we did not meet with whilst we thought to have it in the scriptures, but it hath been all along revealed to us by God's Spirit; so that we can truly say flesh and blood did not reveal the Son to us, but the Father. Yet that which the scriptures testify concerning Christ is exactly true according as it is there related, and is so acknowledged and really owned by us; though we obtained not our knowledge of Christ by the letter, but by receiving a principle of life from God; and coming into union with his Spirit, we came to the true knowledge and owning of the letter; which as it came from the life, so can it only be rightly read and understood in the life from which it came: so that he that is out of that, cannot but err concerning the letter, and misjudge concerning the things of God; whereas he that is guided by, and lives in, God's Spirit (receiving his knowledge there) cannot err concerning the Spirit, or concerning the letter; but hath that within him, which gives to him, and preserves him in, the true sense and understanding of both.

Now, friends, this is an excellent thing indeed, to come to, and be acquainted with, and receive that, which the scriptures testify of; to wit, to receive Christ, to feel union with him in his Spirit, to enter into the new and holy agreement with God, into the everlasting covenant of life and peace, to feel the partition-wall broken down, and the wall of salvation reared up, and the defence which is thereby; to find the law of God, the law of life, the law of the new creation, written in the heart; the pure fear planted there by God, which keepeth the mind and spirit from departing from him; to

have his Spirit put within, causing to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and judgments, and do them; and so to have union and fellowship with the Lord in that which is pure and living of him, in Christ the new and living way, which was before the fall, and leads the obedient out of the fall, even beyond Adam's state, into himself who never fell, in whom is no sin, nor erring, no not for the wayfaring man, though a fool, who often erred and wandered before he came thither; but there the Father's hand, even the hand of the eternal power, is felt, which none can pluck out of. Oh! that ye knew the infallible leader, and were turned from darkness to the light (and did believe therein) and from the power of Satan unto God, that ye through his Spirit might undeniably witness the mysteries of his kingdom, and partake of and enjoy that which his love, grace, and mercy, plentifully distributes among his children that wait upon him in one way, under the holy ordering of his Spirit; which was long harped at and longed after by many of us; but we could never meet with it, till the Lord in his mercy caused the light of his day to shine into our hearts, which chased away the darkness of the night, and made the things of the day manifest.

Are ye of the house of Jacob? Are ye of the right seed? Are ye of the true breathers after God's holiness, after the life and righteousness of his Sion? Oh! then come ye, know, acknowledge, receive, and wait to walk in the light of the Lord; and do not join to that in you which is separated from, and knoweth not, the light of the Lord, but opposeth it. And, friends, I beseech you, take heed in this point; for he that denieth, refuseth, opposeth, speaketh evil, or thinketh hardly of any thing that is indeed of Christ, doth it to Christ himself, in Christ's account (that is, Christ looketh upon it as if he had denied him, refused him, opposed him, spoke evil of him, &c.) and it will be so laid to his charge in the day of the Lord. And indeed such is my love to you, and such my desire after your eternal good and welfare, that I would not have you stumble at the light and power of life, which the Lord hath revealed and stretched out (in this day of his mercy) to gather and save with; but feel the gathering by it from all that scattereth from the Lord, with the preservation which is thereby, and the effecting of that in your spirits which it is able to effect, as it comes to manifest itself unto you, and to put forth his strength in you. So wait for the gathering unto the light (the light of the everlasting day of God) and into the power which is able to redeem and defend the soul from all that is contrary to God. And when ye are there, be diligent and faithful to the Lord: and feel (oh! daily wait to feel from him) the uncloathing of your spirits from all their own unrighteousness; yea, from all their own righteousness also (which is but as filthy rags before the Lord, even of the same nature with the unrighteousness), that ye may be clothed upon with the new and living garment, wherein there is neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. For they that are of Christ, and in Christ, do as really put
on

on the nature, the Spirit, the garment of the second Adam, as ever they did put off the old garment, nature, and spirit.

This is from one, who uprightly and singly desireth your union with the Lord in his pure Truth and Holy Anointing, and your disunion from all that is contrary to him.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

A QUERY added, with its ANSWER.

WHAT is the true confession of Christ, even that confession which ariseth from the knowledge which is life eternal?

Answer. Friends, I witness it to be this, A confession of his nature, a confession of his Spirit, a confession of his life, a confession of his power. To confess the present living appearance of Christ, that is to confess Christ. Behold, saith he, I stand at the door and knock. He that heareth his voice, acknowledgeth him, letteth him in, subjecteth to his truth and Holy Spirit; he confesseth him. But, though a man should acknowledge and confess all that is recorded in the scriptures concerning him; yet if he know not his knocks, so as to let him in, and become subject to his power, he doth not confess Christ as he ought to do, and as God requireth of him. Oh! that ye could learn thus to know Christ, and thus to confess him! For until ye thus know him, ye cannot thus confess him! and your knees must first bow at his name, before your tongues can rightly confess him, to the glory of God the Father! For if ye will indeed glorify the Father, ye must bow to the Son, who is the light wherein God dwells, in the shnings whereof he appears to, and visits the sons of men. And as the Son himself is spiritual; so is the light wherewith he visits dark man. His law is spiritual, able to convert the soul of any man in whose heart it is written, and to make wise (the most simple among men) unto salvation. For the law of God, writ in the heart, is from the covenant of life; and delivers and preserves from the law of sin and death, having the light, power, and Spirit of Christ in and with it, from whom it comes.

Now if ye will know these things clearly, certainly, and infallibly; wait to feel some touches, some drawings, some convictions of God's Spirit upon your hearts. And then dispute not against them; but immediately become subject, so far as the light and drawings of the Father incline and lead the mind; and then ye shall see what he is that draws, and of what nature his drawings are. And if once ye come to feel the preciousness of his ointment; and to partake of it, receiving it and following it, it will

bring you into the pure virginity, which loves and longs after the name that anoints with the pure living oil.

Friends, I was once where ye now are; and in that day, I also (through error and mistake) called the light wherewith Christ hath enlightened man, *natural*, as ye now do. But the Lord hath since shewed me, that it was not the true birth of life in me which so called it; and it is also manifested to me in his Spirit of truth (which deceives not), that it is not the true birth in you, which so judges of it. Oh! that ye were born of the Spirit, and in it knew the names of the things from their nature, and might be taught of the Father to worship in the Son! which ye can never do, till ye come into the Son's light; and that is the Son's light, even that wherewith he hath enlightened men, that they might believe in the Father through him! The scriptures (or any words spoken or written) are not the light itself, but testimonies concerning the light. Now that which ye are to come into, and to dwell and abide in, is the light itself; which light was before any words that testify of it, and is the substance of all the shadows, and the end of all the testimonies concerning it. He is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the End of the new creation of God. Oh! that ye so knew him!

That from which the scriptures came, is the thing, the life, the Spirit, the power itself; which is able to write inwardly, as well as outwardly. And he that knows the thing, and is led to the thing by the inward writing (which is the testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of prophecy), he by the testimony of Jesus, by the Spirit of prophecy, is led to the Holy Power; which he believing in, it prevails to save him out of the contrary spirit and power. And this the Gentiles without the law, the Jews under the law, and the believers under Grace, had spiritually all one and the same way and path of life unto salvation; and God will be clear and just in judging them all according thereunto, who had all some manifestation of the gospel and power which saves, according to the dispensation of the good pleasure of the free giver. And mens perishing in the time of every dispensation, is not for want of light and power from God, but from mens withdrawing and apostatizing from the light and power, which in every dispensation of life stretched forth its hand and arm sufficiently to gather and save.

There is ONE THING more in my HEART unto You, at this Time, which is

Concerning applying the PROMISES.

THE Promises of God are great and precious, and give to partake of the divine nature those that wait upon the Lord in the faith and obedience of his truth. Now there are estates and conditions to which they do belong; and there are estates and conditions to which they do not belong:

belong: and if any one apply any promise to himself, he not being in that estate and condition to which that promise belongs, he deceives his soul, and sucks not in the true sweetness and comfort of the promise, but of his own imaginary apprehensions concerning the promise.

There is a state of wounding, of judging, of God's pleading with the soul, because of sin and transgression. Now he that breaks and wounds, he alone can bind up and heal; and the Lord is to be waited upon in the way of his judgments, until he see meet to bind up and heal. Now the Lord heals by the same Spirit and power wherewith he wounds; but it is hard to lie under the judgment, to bear the indignation of the Lord, and so keep the wound (which he makes) open, till he pour in the oil, and heal. For there is that near, which will be offering to heal before the season, and will be bringing in promises and applying promises, otherwise than the Spirit of the Lord intendeth or applieth them. Now this is diligently to be watched against, that the hurt of the soul (judged and wounded by the Spirit of the Lord) be not healed slightly, and peace spoken to it (and an expectation and hope raised in it) which is not of the Lord. But this is the right way, even to give up to feel that which wounds, and to receive the woundings of thy soul's friend, and lie low before him in the wounded state, waiting upon him in the way of his judgments and righteous indignation; till the same that wounded, speak peace. For the same is to speak peace, and not another; *I the Lord wound, and I heal; I kill, and I make alive. Judgment is mine, and mercy is mine; and they both issue from my lips,* (See *Isa. xii. 1.*) So every one, that would not be deceived about, nor misapply the promises, wait to feel that in you, which leads into the condition to which the promise belongs, and to be led into and kept in the condition by it. And then, the same that leads into the condition, will apply the promise to him who is in the condition, the ear being open to him, hearkening to the Lord, waiting what he will speak, who speaks peace to his people in his seasons; and having the ear shut against the voice of the unrighteous troubler of the souls of God's heritage. Yea, he that applieth the promises to the soul (having brought it into the state to which they belong) he also will lead and bring unto the fulfilling of the promises, even to the receiving of the good things promised and waited for; so that the soul shall witness the gospel to be a glorious state indeed; a state of life, a state of liberty, a state of power, a state of dominion, a state of holiness, a kingdom of righteousness and peace, wherein there are everlasting mansions and dwelling-places in Christ Jesus, for the seed of the righteous for evermore. The Lord God of everlasting mercy, life, power, and rich goodness, cause the light of his own Holy Spirit to shine into your hearts, guide you thereby into and in the true way, even in the pure living path (which was and is but one for ever), that ye may come into the true possession, and full enjoyment, and infallible witnessing of these things.

There is another QUERY, of great Concernment, which
springeth up in my Heart towards you.

Query. **I**S not the Spirit, or anointing, the great gospel-promise, and the great gospel-ordinance? Is not he *truth, and no lie*, and the leader out of all lies and deceits into the truth, and the preserver of the mind and spirit therein? *Little children*, said the same apostle, who had directed to the anointing, *keep yourselves from idols*. Is there any possibility of being kept from images and idols, but by him? Can any understand the things of the Spirit, or the words spoken by the Spirit concerning spiritual things, but by him? And then, is not every apprehension, that ye take up from the scriptures concerning spiritual things, which ye have not from him (but comprehend and gather of yourselves), an image, or conceiving of your own, concerning that thing, and not that true knowledge and understanding of the thing which he alone can give? Oh! that all the chambers of imagery were thrown down in you, and every idol of the heart and mind discovered to you, and broken down by the light and power of the Lord; that ye might come to that which is pure and living, and by its purifying know the pure heart, the pure mind, the pure conscience, and offer up the pure perfect offering; not the lame, blind, imperfect, &c. which were not accepted (in the figure) under the law, nor acceptable under the gospel, *Mal. i. 11. 13. and chap. iii. 3.*

Friends, ye must know that which is pure from God, and ye must come into it (out of that which is impure, into that which is pure). Now that ye may do so, ye must know the purifying; for nothing that is impure, can enter into that which is pure. Yea, ye must become priests to God, and wear the priest's garment, the pure garment, the living garment, the fine linnen, without mixture of the woollen. Ye must be born of the innocency, be cloathed with the innocency. The stony, hard, desperately-wicked heart must be taken away, and the tender heart of flesh received; the mind renewed to God, the fear put within (which cleanseth and keepeth clean), the law writ within, the Spirit of the Lord put in the inward parts, and felt powerfully operating and changing there. Yea, and the inside must not only be clean, but the outside also; for ye must be cloathed with the Spirit, cloathed with the Lamb's righteousness and holiness; and thus ye must appear before the Lord in his temple, which is the beauty of holiness, whose house holiness becomes for ever; where ye are never to appear in your own filthy rags, but in the nature, Spirit, righteousness, and life of Christ. And thus ye are well-pleasing to God, even in that which is of God; being born of that, formed of that, found in that, appearing in that. But in his own, no man can be accepted; for it is determined of God,

God, and stands irreversibile for ever, that in his own (in his own knowledge, in his own faith, in his own obedience, in his own righteousness, in his own willing and running, &c.) shall no flesh for ever be justified in his sight; but only and alone in the nature, Spirit, life, righteousness, faith, obedience, and holiness of his Son. Therefore wait for the seed, that ye may know the seed, feel the seed, the pure seed of life (the leaven of the heavenly kingdom) and may witness it arising and come in you to do the will, and you in it quickened and enabled to live to and serve the living God. And when ye know this seed, ye know Christ; and when ye receive this seed, ye receive Christ; and if it live in you, Christ lives in you, and in it (being in it, and abiding in it) are ye heirs of the life, kingdom and power, which hath no end; and shall daily feel the promises and blessings belonging to the seed, flowing in upon your spirits. But if ye content yourselves with the knowledge of Christ, which the erring and apostatised spirit of man from the life and power, may gather out of the letter of the scriptures, and feed thereon; that will not nourish you up to eternal life, but death, and sin, and the gates of hell will have power over you notwithstanding that; but if ye, through the Spirit, receive power over that which is contrary to God, and through him mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Therefore wait for the manifestation of the pure power of the endless life, which is now dispensed from on high (blessed be the name of the living one) and wait to know and be joined to that seed of life, wherein and whereby it is dispensed, that ye may witness Christ's kingdom come to you, and the reign of your spirits with him therein, over all that captivateth from him, loadeth the soul, boweth down and oppresseth.

A P O S T S C R I P T,

Concerning DECEIT and being DECEIVED.

THERE is that which deceives (where it is hearkened to) and there is that which is liable to be deceived by it. There is likewise that which deceiveth not; and there is also that which cannot be deceived. So likewise there is a pure fear and watching in the truth against the deceit, lest by any means it should enter and betray. As also there is a fear that is a snare (which the true faith preserves out of), whereby many are entangled in the very bowels of deceit, even concerning those very things about which they are afraid they should be deceived. This hath been experienced by those, who have been acquainted with the Lord's precious truth, and thereby are come to know and discern the wiles and devices of Satan; who often hath quenched what the Lord hath kindled, by his stirring

ring up a fear, lest it should not be of the Lord, but from the spirit of deceit.

It is true, that in the apostasy from the life and Spirit of truth, deceit did generally prevail and overwhelm the minds of people. And so far as people are yet in the apostasy (not being gathered and redeemed out of it, by the Spirit and power of the Lord), they are yet under deceit; though perhaps they little think so. Little did we think formerly (and little do they think now, who are now in that state we were then in), that while we so much feared being deceived, we were already deceived, being short of the life and power of truth, which alone is able to make free and preserve from deceit. When the Lord cometh to bring to the primitive light and principle, that he might perfectly deliver out of deceit; what can the enemy do more advantageously towards keeping his hold in the mind (and towards keeping the mind in the deceits wherein he hath already entangled it), than to stir up and heighten a fear in it, lest the precious truth, which God maketh manifest to deliver the soul by, should be deceit? And they that hearken to and let in the voice of the deceiver, must needs believe it to be so. And thus with them light cometh to be called darkness, and darkness light. Yea, who is it, at this day, who escapeth this snare, of calling evil good, and good evil? Surely none but he, whose soul is led into and lives in the light and power of truth.

For most men take up principles (according to their own, or other mens understanding of the scriptures), and judge according to those principles; and so the Spirit and light of the Lord judgeth not in them, but they themselves judge according to an assumed knowledge. So that flesh is not silent, the man is not dead in them and brought to nothing, but only lives in an higher region than he did before. Before, he lived in an apparent unrighteousness; now he lives in an imagined righteousness and faith; but not in the Son's righteousness, not in the Son's faith, not in the Son's power, not in the Son's dominion; but at best only in that which he apprehendeth and strongly imagineth to be so.

Oh! happy is he, who is come through all his own imaginings and conceivings about the things of God, and his own apprehensions about scriptures and promises, and is come into the thing itself, into the Spirit of life (into the truth and into the power), and who walks with God therein, daily witnessing the redemption which is of him through his Son Jesus Christ, who is known and partook of in the pure quickening Spirit, and not otherwise. And he that is truly begotten of God, and dwells with him in the light which is eternal, knows that he is of God; which others may strongly imagine they are, but none else can truly know it, but may easily err and be entangled in the deceits of the enemy (about the new birth, and other weighty things) while they are greatly afraid of being deceived by him, and so (through that fear) fly the pure truth, which frees from deceits, lest it should deceive them.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT of my Soul's Travel towards the Holy Land, and how at length it pleased the LORD to join my Heart to his pure, holy, living Truth; wherein I have witnessed the New Covenant, and Peace with the Lord therein. With a few Words concerning the Way of Knowing and Receiving the Truth: which is not done by Disputes and Reasonings of the Mind about it; but in waiting aright for the Demonstration and Power of GOD's Spirit to open the Heart and Understanding, and by submissive Obedience to it, even in its lowest Appearances in the inward Parts.

MY heart from my childhood was pointed towards the Lord; whom I feared and longed after from my tender years; wherein I felt, that I could not be satisfied with (nor indeed seek after) the things of this perishing world, which naturally pass away; but I desired true sense of, and unity with, that which abideth for ever. There was somewhat indeed then still within me (even the seed of eternity) which leavened and balanced my spirit almost continually; but I knew it not distinctly, so as to turn to it, and give up to it, entirely and understandingly. In this temper of mind I earnestly sought after the Lord, applying myself to hear sermons and read the best books I could meet with, but especially the scriptures, which were very sweet and savoury to me; yea, I very earnestly desired and pressed after the knowledge of the scriptures, but was much afraid of receiving mens interpretations of them, or of fastening any interpretation upon them myself; but waited much, and prayed much, that from the Spirit of the Lord I might receive the true understanding of them, and that he would chiefly endue me with that knowledge, which I might feel sanctifying and saving. And indeed I did sensibly receive of his love, of his mercy, and of his grace, which I felt still freely to move towards me, and at seasons when I was most filled with the sense of my own unworthiness, and had least expectations of the manifestation of them. But I was exceedingly entangled about election and reprobation (having drunk in that doctrine, according as

it was then held forth by the strictest of those that were termed Puritans, and as then seemed to be very manifest and positive from *Rom. ix, &c.*), fearing lest, notwithstanding all my desires and seekings after the Lord, he might in his decree have passed me by; and I felt it would be bitter to me to bear his wrath, and be separated from his love for evermore; yet, if he had so decreed, it would be, and I should (notwithstanding these fair beginnings and hopes) fall away and perish at the last. In this great trouble and grief (which was much added to by not finding the Spirit of God so in me and with me, as I had read and believed the former Christians had it), and in mourning over and grappling with secret corruptions and temptations, I spent many years, and fell into great weakness of body; and often casting myself upon my bed, did wring my hands and weep bitterly, begging earnestly of the Lord, daily, that I might be pitied by him, and helped against my enemies, and be made conformable to the image of his Son, by his own renewing power. And indeed at last (when my nature was almost spent, and the pit of despair was even closing its mouth upon me) mercy sprang, and deliverance came, and the Lord my God owned me, and sealed his love unto me, and light sprang within me, which made not only the scriptures, but the very outward creatures glorious in my eye, so that every thing was sweet and pleasant and lightsome round about me. But I soon felt, that this estate was too high and glorious for me, and I was not able to abide in it, it so overcame my natural spirits; wherefore, blessing the name of the Lord for his great goodness to me, I prayed unto him to take that from me which I was not able to bear, and to give me such a proportion of his light and presence, as was suitable to my present state, and might fit me for his service. Whereupon this was presently removed from me; yet a savour remained with me, wherein I had sweetness, and comfort, and refreshment for a long season. But my mind did not then know how to turn to and dwell with that which gave me the savour, nor rightly to read what God did daily write in my heart, which sufficiently manifested itself to be of him, by its living virtue and pure operation upon me; but I looked upon the scriptures to be my rule, and so would weigh the inward appearances of God to me by what was outwardly written, and durst not receive any thing from God immediately, as it sprang from the fountain, but only in that mediate way. Herein did I limit the Holy One of Israel, and exceedingly hurt my own soul, as I afterwards felt and came to understand. Yet the Lord was tender to me, and condescended exceedingly, opening scriptures to me, freshly every day, teaching and instructing, warming and comforting my heart thereby; and truly he did help me to pray, and to believe, and to love him and his appearances in any; yea, to love all the sons of men, and all his creatures, with a true love. But that in me which knew not the appearances of the Lord

in

in my spirit, but would limit him to words of scriptures formerly written, that proceeded yet further, and would be raising a fabrick of knowledge out of the scriptures, and gathering a perfect rule (as I thought) concerning my heart, my words, my ways, my worship; and according to what I thus drank in (after this manner, from the scriptures) I practised, and with much seriousness of spirit and prayer to God fell a helping to build up an Independent congregation, wherein the savour of life and the presence of God was fresh with me, as I believe there are yet some alive of that congregation can testify.

This was my state, when I was smitten, broken, and distressed by the Lord, confounded in my worship, confounded in my knowledge, stripped of all in one day (which it is hard to utter) and was matter of amazement to all that beheld me. I lay open and naked to all that would enquire of me, and strive to search out what might be the cause the Lord should deal so with me. They would at first be jealous that I had sinned and provoked him so to do; but when they had scanned things thoroughly, and I had opened my heart nakedly to them, I do not remember any one that ever retained that sense concerning me. My soul remembereth the wormwood and gall, the exceeding bitterness of that state, and is still humbled in me in the remembrance of it before the Lord. Oh! how did I wish with Job, that I might come before him, and bowingly plead with him; for indeed I had no sense of any guilt upon me, but was sick of love towards him, and as one violently rent from the bosom of his beloved! Oh! how gladly would I have met with death! For I was weary all the day long, and afraid of the night, and weary also of the night-season, and afraid of the ensuing day. I remember my grievous and bitter mournings to the Lord; how often did I say, *O Lord, why hast thou forsaken me? Why hast thou broken me to pieces? I had no delight but thee, no desire after any but thee. My heart was bent wholly to serve thee, and thou hast even fitted me (as appeared to my sense) by many deep exercises and experiences for thy service; why dost thou make me thus miserable?* Sometimes I would cast mine eye upon a scripture, and my heart would even melt within me; at other times I would desire to pray to my God, as I had formerly done; but I found I knew him not, and I could not tell how to pray, or in any-wise to come near him, as I had formerly done. In this condition I wandered up and down from mountain to hill, from one sort to another, with a cry in my spirit, *Can ye tell news of my beloved? Where doth he dwell? Where doth he appear?* But their voices were still strange to me, and I should retire sad and oppressed, and bowed down in spirit, from them.

Now surely, all serious, sober, sensible people, will be ready to enquire, how I came satisfyingly to know the Lord at length; or whether I do yet certainly know him, and am yet truly satisfied?

Yes indeed, I am satisfied at my very heart. Truly my heart is united to him whom I longed after, in an everlasting covenant of pure life and peace.

Well then, how came this about? will some say.

Why thus. The Lord opened my spirit; the Lord gave me the certain and sensible feeling of the pure seed, which had been with me from the beginning; the Lord caused his holy power to fall upon me, and gave me such an inward demonstration and feeling of the seed of life, that I cried out in my spirit, *This is he, this is he; there is not another, there never was another.* He was always near me, though I knew him not (not so sensibly, not so distinctly, as now he was revealed in me and to me by the Father); *Oh! that I might now be joined to him, and be alone might live in me.* And so in the willingness, which God had wrought in me (in this day of his power to my soul), I gave up to be instructed, exercised, and led by him, in the waiting for and feeling of his holy seed, that all might be wrought out of me which could not live with the seed, but would be hindering the dwelling and reigning of the seed in me, while it remained and had power. And so I have gone through a sore travail, and fight of afflictions and temptations, of many kinds; wherein the Lord hath been merciful to me in helping me, and preserving the spark of life in me, in the midst of many things which had befallen me, whose nature tended to quench and extinguish it.

Now thus having met with the true way, and walked with the Lord therein, wherein daily certainty, yea and full assurance of faith and of understanding is at length obtained; I cannot be silent (true love and pure life stirring in me and moving me), but am necessitated to testify of it to others; and this is it, To retire inwardly, and wait to feel somewhat of the Lord, somewhat of his Holy Spirit and power, discovering and drawing from that which is contrary to him, and into his holy nature and heavenly image. And then, as the mind is joined to this, somewhat is received, some true life, some true light, some true discerning; which the creature not exceeding (but abiding in the measure of) is safe; but it is easy erring from this, but hard abiding with it, and not going before its leadings. But he that feels life, and begins in life, doth he not begin safely? And he that waits, and fears, and goes on no further than his captain goes before him, doth he not proceed safely? Yea very safely, even till he cometh to be so settled and established in the virtue, demonstration and power of truth, as nothing can prevail to shake him. Now, blessed be the Lord, there are many at this day, who can truly and faithfully witness, that they have been brought by the Lord to this state. And thus have we learned of the Lord; to wit, not by the high, striving, aspiring mind; but by lying low, and being contented with a little. If
but

but a crumb of bread (yet if bread) if but a drop of water (yet if water) we have been contented with it, and also thankful to the Lord for it; nor by thoughtfulness, and wise searching and deep considering with our own wisdom and reason have we obtained it; but in the still, meek, and humble waiting, have we found that brought into the death, which is not to know the mysteries of God's kingdom, and that which is to live, made alive and increafe in life.

Therefore he that would truly know the Lord, let him take heed of his own reason and understanding. I tried this way very far; for I considered most seriously and uprightly; I prayed, I read the scriptures, I earnestly desired to understand and find out whether that, which this people, called QUAKERS, testified of, was the only way and truth of God (as they seemed to me but to pretend); but for all this prejudices multiplied upon me, and strong reasonings against them, which appeared to me as unanswerable. But when the Lord revealed his seed in me, and touched my heart therewith, which administered true life and virtue to me, I presently felt them there the children of the Most High, and so grown up in his life, power, and holy dominion (as the inward eye, being opened by the Lord, sees) as drew forth from me great reverence of heart, and praises to the Lord, who had so appeared among men in these latter days. And as God draweth, in any respect, oh! give up in faithfulness to him! Despise the shame, take up the cross; for indeed it is a way which is very cross to man, and which his wisdom will exceedingly be ashamed of; but that must be denied and turned from, and the secret sensible drawings of God's Spirit waited for and given up to. Mind, people: He that will come into the new covenant, must come into the obedience of it. The light of life, which God hath hid in the heart, is the covenant; and from this covenant God doth not give knowledge to satisfy the vast, aspiring, comprehending wisdom of man; but living knowledge, to feed that which is quickened by him; which knowledge is given in the obedience, and is very sweet and precious to the state of him that knows how to feed upon it. Yea truly, this is of a very excellent, pure, precious nature, and a little of it weighs down that great vast knowledge in the comprehending part, which the man's spirit and nature so much prizeth and presseth after. And truly, friends, I witness at this day a great difference between the sweetness of comprehending the knowledge of things, as expressed in the scriptures (this I fed much on formerly), and tasting the hidden life, the hidden Manna in the heart (which is my food now, blessed for ever be the Lord my God and Saviour). Oh! that others had a true, certain, and sensible taste of the life, virtue, and goodness of the Lord, as it is revealed there! Surely, it could not but kindle the true hunger, and inflame the true thirst; which can never be satisfied but by the true bread, and by water from the living fountain.

54 *A brief Account of my Soul's Travel, &c.*

fountain. This the Lord (in the tenderness of his love, and in the riches of his grace and mercy) hath brought us to; and this we earnestly and uprightly desire and endeavour, that others may be brought to also; that they may rightly (in the true silence of the flesh, and in the pure stillness of spirit) wait for, and in the Lord's due time receive, that which answers the desire of the awakened mind and soul, and satisfies it with the true precious substance for evermore, *Amen.*

7 AP 59

SOME

S O M E
T H I N G S
RELATING TO
R E L I G I O N,
Proposed to the Consideration of the
R O Y A L S O C I E T Y,
S O T E R M E D;

T O W I T,

Concerning the Right Ground of
Certainty therein.

Concerning Tenderness of Spirit,
and Persecution.

A Q U E R Y concerning Separation.

Concerning Washing away Sin from
the Conscience; and the Garment
of Salvation, and what it is that
is covered therewith.

L I K E W I S E,

Some Q U E S T I O N S and A N S W E R S concerning the
Church of the New Covenant, the Rock or Foundation whereon
it is Built, and its Preservation by and upon the Rock.

W I T H

Some Q U E R I E S concerning the scattered and hidden Estate of the
Church; and concerning that Church which got up in the View of the
Word, instead thereof; and was acknowledged by the World, as if she
had been the True Church, though in Deed and Truth she was not so.

Whereunto are added,

Some Q U E R I E S to P R O F E S S O R S who speak of High
Attainments, &c.

Written by One, whom it hath pleased the L O R D (of his great Goodness,
and tender Mercy) to lead out of the Darkeness, into his marvellous
Light; known among Men by the Name of

I S A A C P E N I N G T O N.

TO THE
 ROYAL SOCIETY,
 S O E D.

FRIENDS,

I HAVE heard that ye are seeking after the excellency of nature and learning. I am not for discouraging any man, in endeavouring after that which is good, useful, and excellent in its kind and place; but it is the advantage of every thing, to know and abide in its place; and to honour and serve him, from whom all good gifts and endowments come. Man hath but a moment in this world, and he is here no more; and then the *spirit returneth to God that gave it*, to give an account of the talent which he gave it, and its improvement thereof, to the glory of him that gave it, and to the salvation of its own soul. Now, this talent is of an higher kind than nature, and will lead higher than nature; giving a man to partake of that wisdom from which nature came; and teaching him to order all that is natural to its right end. For God is not an enemy to nature, but to the corruption and disorder of nature. I desire ye might know and partake of the true wisdom, and feel union with God in the principle of his own life; and the incorruptible and heavenly seed of God receive dominion over the earthly and corruptible. For this end singly, in the love springing up in my heart towards you (as it often doth, both towards particular persons and societies; for I am a friend to all; and a lover of all; sincerely desiring the good of all, and the right guidance of their souls to happiness), have I proposed these things following more particularly to your view, though they concern others also, that ye thereby might be awakened to search after that which is most excellent in you, and be acquainted with the virtue and precious effects thereof, to the full satisfaction and compleat joy of your souls, in that which alone is able fully to satisfy, and give them ground of durable joy and rejoicing, in that which is not of a perishing nature; but which was, and is, and will be the same for ever.

From a friend to the everlasting peace of your souls, and a desirer of your welfare and prosperity in this world,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

S O M E

THINGS relating to RELIGION, &c.

Of Certainty, and rightly-grounded Assurance, in Matters of
RELIGION.

THERE is a witness of and from God in every conscience; which, in his light, power, and authority, witnesseth for him, and against that which is contrary to him, as he pleaseth to move upon it, visiting and drawing the hearts of the sons of men by it.

From this witness proceeds the true and well-grounded religion in the mind towards God: For this witness both testifieth and demonstrateth that there is a God, and also inclineth the mind to desire and seek after the right knowledge and true worship of him.

And such who keep to this witness, and wait upon God therein, are taught by it the true spiritual worship; the true and pure fear of the Most High; the faith which he giveth to his saints; the love which is chaste and unfeigned; the hope which purifieth the mind, and anchors it on the eternal rock; the meekness, patience, gentleness, humility, &c. which is not of man's nature, but the gift of God, and the nature of the heavenly giver.

And then for exercises of religion, as praying to the Father of spirits, hearing the heavenly voice, reading in the Spirit, and with the renewed understanding, singing and making melody in the heart (and also with the voice) to the Lord, as his life is felt, and the spiritual blessings and treasure received; all these, and whatever else is judged necessary for the soul, are taught by this witness of God in the conscience, as the soul groweth up in the light, Spirit, nature, and holy power thereof.

But now, when the Lord reacheth to his witness in men, and is teaching their hearts by it, then the enemy, the other spirit, whose seat is in the other part, keepeth a noise there, to overbear the voice of the witness, and to make men take up religion in another part, which is shallow, and reacheth not to the depth and weight of truth, which is in the witness

58 *Of Certainty and rightly-grounded Assurance*

of God, and which the witness of God gives to them that come thither.

Thus the enemy stirreth up reasonings, imaginations, and consultations about God, and his worship; wherein he raiseth up the vain shallow mind, forging and bringing forth somewhat pleasing and suitable to the earthly understanding; taking up the mind therewith, and engaging the heart in some such practices therefrom as may quiet and satisfy that part in men. For the ways that men take up in their reasonings and understandings, satisfy their reasonings and understandings; and so they walk in the light of the sparks, and warm themselves by the fire of their own kindling; but all this answers not the witness of God in them, nor will be approved by his light in their own consciences, when it comes again to be revealed and made manifest in them.

This was the ground of the error both of the Jews and Gentiles.

The Gentiles were enlightened by God with his true light; what might be known of God (suitable to their state and capacity) being manifested in them; inasmuch as it is witnessed concerning them in the scriptures (which are a true record and testimony) that they knew God. But when they knew him, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and so their foolish heart was darkened concerning him: and they worshipped him not as the witness taught them he was to be worshipped, not according to the manifestation of his light in them; but according to their own foolish imaginations and reasonings, which taught them to make images of him, and so to worship him in and through creatures, according to their own inventions; which is not the true worship, *Rom. i. 21, 22, 23.*

So likewise the Jews, not keeping to the manifestation of his light within them (to the word or commandment nigh in the mouth and heart, to which Moses directed them), which would have taught and enabled them to have kept to the Law of the letter without them; they also ran into the nature and spirit of the heathen, and fell into imaginings and reasonings, which led them to worship like them; inasmuch that they also changed their glory into the image of an ox, that eateth grass, *Pf. cvi. 20.*

Now from this part in man ariseth all the uncertainty, and doubts, and dissatisfaction about religion. And hence arise the opinions, and judgments, and reasonings, in the minds of men: yea, indeed, the best of mens religion here is but an opinion or judgment, which the breath of God's Spirit will shake and dissolve every-where, sooner or later. All flesh is grass; and all the beauty of mens knowledge, religion, and worship here, will wither like grass. All the buildings and churches that are raised here (how beautiful soever) are but Babylon, built by man's understanding, by man's knowledge, by man's comprehension, by man's wisdom, by man's skill, and indeed in man's will and time, and their standing, beauty, strength, and glory, is but from man, and in man's day, and will fade away like a flower.

But

But the true certainty is in the day of God, from the light of his Spirit shining into man's spirit, from God's inward reaching to his heart by his power, and testifying his truth there. And this all the powers of darkness cannot prevail against in itself; no, nor against that man that is kept to it. For it is the rock (the only rock) upon which the whole church is built, and which cannot fail to preserve every member of the church which is built upon it.

Ye then which would come to certainty in religion, observe the way which is made manifest from God in this our day, blessed be his name, which is this: mind the witness of God in thy heart, and come to, and build upon, the light thereof. Dwell not in reasonings; take not up thy religion in reasonings of the mind; but pass through them, pass beyond them, into a light of an higher nature. Wait to know the birth which is from God, and the light which he gives to that birth. What is the birth? Is not the birth of and from the second Adam? And what is the heavenly birth's light? Is it not the light of the second Adam? Is it not in nature and kind above the light of the first Adam? Where is the seat of reasonings? Is it not the earthly mind, the fallen mind? Here lies man's strength; here is man's wisdom; here is man's life. It is so indeed; but the wisdom of Christ, the light of Christ, the life of Christ, the power of Christ, is a cross to this; finds it in the enmity against God, crucifies it, slays it, brings it to nothing; and he that will become wise as to God, must become a fool unto all this, a child, a babe, entering the kingdom without this, and must there remain naked as to this, and never put it on more.

Now observe (ye that have understanding and true sense) the difference between the religion which God hath taught us, and led us into, and the religions of all men upon the earth besides.

Our religion stands wholly out of that, which all their religion stands in. Their religion stands in the comprehension, in a belief of a literal relation or description. Our religion stands in a principle which changeth the mind, wherein the Spirit of life appeareth to, and witnesseth in the conscience to and concerning the things of the kingdom; where we hear the voice, and see the express image of the Invisible One, and know things, not from an outward relation, but from their inward nature, virtue, and power. Yea, here (we must profess) we so know things, that we are fully satisfied about them, and could not doubt concerning them, though there never had been word or letter written of them; though indeed it is also a great comfort, and sweet refreshment to us, to read that testified of outwardly, which (through the tender mercy of our God) we feel and enjoy inwardly. And in this our whole religion consists; to wit, in the silence and death of the flesh, and in the quickening and flowing life of the Spirit. For he who is of the new-birth, of the new-creation, of the second Adam (the Lord from heaven), is as really alive to God, and as really lives to him in his Spirit, as ever he was really dead in trespasses and sins in the time of his alienation and estrangement from God.

Of Tenderness of Spirit, and Persecution.

HE which is born of God, he who is of the love, and in the love, cannot but be tender. He who is born of the earthly wisdom, who taketh up and holdeth forth a religion there, cannot but persecute. Why so? Because he cannot but judge that any man may take up religion as he hath done, and so, by reasonings, may come to acknowledge and take up what he hath taken up, and holdeth forth, or else he is wilful and stubborn, as he judgeth. But now he that is born of God, and hath received his light, knowledge, religion, and way of worship from him, he knoweth that no man can rightly receive them but the same way; to wit, from God, by the light which he causeth to shine into the heart at his pleasure, and in the faith which he gives. So that God's free and powerful Spirit is to be waited upon, for the working of all in his people, and not any forced to act beyond, or contrary to, the principle of his life and light in them.

A QUERY concerning SEPARATION.

Query. **W**HETHER, after the apostasy from the Spirit, life, and power of the apostles, and the getting up of the antichristian state, church, and worship, there must not of necessity be a separation from all these, before there can be a recovery of the life and power again, and of the true church-state, which was brought forth in the days of the apostles? Must there not be a perfect coming out of the corrupt state (in the whole nature, several parts and degrees of it) before there can be a restoration to, and witnessing of, the true and pure state? Must not the Christians now come out of all the antichristian inventions and churches, as well as the Christians of old came out of all the heathenish worship, yea, out of the Jewish worship and church (which once was of God) before they can become an holy building, an habitation to God in the Spirit? Yea, doth not the same Spirit which cried to the people of God then, *Come out from among them, and be ye separate*, &c. call and cry now, *Come out of her, my people*, out of Babylon, out of the false church, out of all the antichristian buildings, which are reared up after the several forms and ways of mens inventing, being out of the Spirit, life, and power which alone is able to build up in and unto the Lord? And what is that which cries out against separation, in the day of the Lord's dividing and separating, but that spirit which

which would hold back the soul from being gathered to the Lord, in the chains of darkness, and in the land of death and confusion?

Oh! that men knew that which divides and separates, and which is appointed by God to divide and separate both inwardly and outwardly, and might feel the full work and effect of it, even perfect separation from all that is not of God, that so they might be joined to him, and built up in him, who is the life, rest, peace, joy, and pure breath of the soul for ever! The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; and what doth it do? Why it separates between nation and nation, between church and church, between people and people, between cattle and cattle, between soul and soul, yea, between the thoughts and intents of the same heart; owning and cherishing all that is of the pure, and condemning and destroying all that is of the impure. And happy, oh! for ever happy is he, who can witness the work of this word perfected in his soul, even the axe of the Lord powerfully laid to, and having cut down all that is corrupt in him, that the pure plant of God may flourish, and bring forth fruit in him in peace, without annoyance or interruption of the impure. Then the river of life, as the streams of everlasting righteousness, shall flow into the vessel, and Jerusalem become in and to him a quiet habitation, and nothing be able to hurt or destroy any thing of life in him, who dwells in, and abides on, the mountain of God's holiness. Oh! blessed is the race of travellers, which in the pure light of the everlasting day are travelling thitherwards, even with their hearts and faces faithfully bent towards Sion, which is the holy, spiritual, heavenly hill of God! And blessed, oh! blessed for ever is the Lord God of life and power, who is the faithful guider, leader, and conductor of all that follow the footsteps of the flock, in the way which is pure, true, living, and everlasting.

Concerning the washing away of Sin from the Conscience, and the Garment of Salvation, and what it is that is covered therewith.

THERE is somewhat appointed by God to wash away sin, which is the water of regeneration, the water of life, the Spirit's water, and the blood of the Lamb, which are known, received, and felt by faith in the light of the Spirit, wherein alone his work is wrought.

Thus now, upon believing, the soul is washed; the faith brings in, or lets in, the water and blood, which cleanse and purge the conscience from the sin, which before stained and defiled it: and according to the faith, so is the water and blood let in, and accordingly is the washing. And he that

is.

is baptized, he that is washed by the Spirit, comes out of the water clean; and watching to the light wherein he was purified, witnesseth the powerful word of life as able to preserve in cleanness, as it was to cleanse.

But if there be not a watch to, and faith in, and single-hearted obedience to, that which purified, and keepeth pure, there is that near which will defile, where it is hearkened to and let in; there is that which will tempt to lust and sin, and so draw into darkness and death again. And if any man sin afterwards, sin defiles again, and the stain thereof will lie upon the conscience, till by repentance and faith the water and blood be let in again, and the cleansing virtue from it received and restored again. So that if any man sin, there is an * advocate, an intercessor, a divine helper, one who hath the water of life, and the blood of life to wash with. There is a fountain set open for sin, and for uncleanness, for Judah and Jerusalem to wash therefrom; but every defilement and pollution sticks until it be washed off.

Now there are sins of several kinds. Some are easily remitted and washed off, inasmuch as the stain is hardly felt by the soul, the tender mercy and pure life doth so readily and naturally flow over them. Some again are long held and bound by the Spirit upon the conscience, and often remembered to the heart, which is apt to backslide: yea, there is in some cases a severe judgment, and a long waiting on the Lord for his mercy, and for his renewing and enlivening of faith, before the water and blood which washeth can be again felt. For faith is not in a man's power, nor repentance neither; but they are given of God, to whom and when he pleaseth. And a man that is in part converted, may give ear to the enemy, and let in sin and death upon the soul; but he cannot repent again presently, nor believe again presently; but as God breathes upon him, and revives the work of faith and repentance in him.

There were sins under the old covenant, and there are sins under the new. The sins of the old covenant did lie upon him that committed them, until they were expiated according to the law of the old covenant; and sins under the new covenant lie also upon the soul and conscience, until they be expiated according to the law of the new covenant; which is until the advocate interpose and plead with the Father, and give faith and repentance to the soul, and sprinkle upon the heart and conscience that water and blood which hath virtue in it to wash. And if it were not for this after-washing (as I may so say) no man could be saved: but though he were once washed, yet sinning again afterwards, he would die in his sins (and so fall under condemnation), unless he were again washed. Oh! blessed be the name of the Lord, for the water and blood of the covenant, and

* But this is not the state of them that sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of truth.

Concerning the washing away of Sin, &c. 63

for his continual pouring them out upon the souls of his, in the light that is eternal!

Now as men come to the truth as it is in Jesus, they will find their own apprehensions about these things to have been but dreams, wherewith the enemy hath fed and pleased them, while he hath lulled them asleep in the night of darkness, that he might the better steal away the true weighty knowledge of the things of the kingdom from them. Thus men have dreamed about justification, about sanctification, about regeneration, about redemption, about faith, hope, love, righteousness, peace, joy, &c. And have been mistaken about them, missing of that power and light whereby and wherein they are revealed and made manifest. Now he that will rightly know these things, must know them in the feeling and true experience; and therein he shall find all these are wrought in a mysterious way of pure life's operation, out of the reach of man's comprehension; and no man can understand them, but as the new and holy understanding is given him; nor retain the sense and knowledge of them, but as he abides in the new nature, and retains the new understanding.

So for the garment of salvation; that is Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the nature of Christ, the Spirit of Christ. This is the holy covering. He that puts on Christ, puts on this: he that wears Christ, wears this: he that appears before God in Christ, appears in this; and the soul puts on this, as it puts off the other. It is the purified soul that only puts on him that is pure: and as a man is cleansed from the impure, so only hath he in him a capacity of receiving and being cloathed with Christ. And this now is the work of the true ministry; to wit, to preach the Word, to reveal the Word, and bring the mind to the Word (which changeth it, and begets the new capacity), and so to begin the work of life and reconciliation, wherein and whereby there is some uncloathing of the old, and some cloathing with the new; and so to carry on this work in the Spirit and power of the Father until it be perfected. And this is a blessed work, and blessed is the ministry which is called to, and entrusted with, this work, being faithful in it: and blessed are they that witness the truth of, and receive the effect of, this ministry, and are subject to it in the Lord. For through and under this ministry there is a receiving of a perfect gift in some measure at first (wherein some true union and little acquaintance with the Lord of life is at first witnessed, and some operation of the light and power of his Holy Spirit): and a growing up in it unto perfection, as the soul is exercised by it, and faithful to the Lord in the exercise, under the daily cross, which daily worketh against and crucifieth in the heart, mind, life, and conversation whatever is contrary to God, as it is singly waited for, taken up, and subjected to.

Some

SOME
QUESTIONS and ANSWERS,
CONCERNING

The Church of the New Covenant, the Rock or Foundation whereon it is built, and its Preservation by and upon the Rock. With some *QUERIES* concerning the scattered Estate of the true Church, and concerning that Church which got up in its stead, and made a great Shew with her golden Cup, for the Time while the true Church was scattered.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the church of God under the new agreement or covenant?

Ans. It is a company of living stones, quickened by God, and knit together in the unity and fellowship of his Spirit, to worship God together in his Spirit, and offer up unto him spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. What was the church of the old covenant? Was it not the seed of Abraham, the outward Jews, the children of the old covenant? And what is the church of the new covenant? Is it not the seed of God, the Jews inward, the children of the new covenant?

Quest. *How are these stones joined together?*

Ans. By the Spirit of life, which begets them all in one nature, and knits them together in that nature. By the inward circumcision, cutting off that which causeth enmity and disunion, and so fitting them to be made one new lump in Christ. By Christ's baptism, which is the baptism of fire and of his Spirit, which burns up the old earthly nature, and so baptizes them into one new living body, suitable and fitting to their head, which is the fountain of life, and distributes life through all the body, according to its capacity, need, and service.

Quest. *Upon what is this church built?*

Ans. Upon the rock or foundation of God, which God hath laid in his spiritual Sion; which rock is Christ. For other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ; nor other rock did the Lord ever chuse for his church to be built upon; nor hath any other rock sufficient

cient strength to bear up the building against the storms and stress of the powers of darkness, which it often meeteth with, even every member, in its travels; after it is once built on the rock, the gates of hell press hard upon it; but abiding on the rock, it feels the strength and preservation of the rock. For as they cannot prevail against Christ, so neither can they prevail against that which is built upon him. But if there be a going forth from the strength and preservation, there is a liableness to be made a prey. And the promise is not absolutely and perpetually to that person or congregation which is received or let into the truth; but to that person or church which abideth and continueth in the truth unto the end. The Jews were safe in the faith and obedience of their covenant; and the Christians, or Christian churches, are not safe but in the faith and obedience of theirs. For if they walked not humbly with the Lord, and in his fear, which keeps the heart from departing from him, and in the faith whereby they stand, they were to be cut off from their church-state, as well as the Jews were from theirs, as the apostle Paul expressly tells the church at Rome, *Rom. xi. 21, 22*.

Quest. 4. What was Paul?

Ans. The apostle of the Gentiles, who laboured abundantly, even more abundantly than all the other apostles; and hath left more instructions relating to the Gentiles than all the apostles besides; and was tender of them, in standing for and defending their liberty in Christ, when Peter a little warped, and was to be blamed, *Gal. ii. 11*. For indeed man cannot be certain and infallible; further than he keepeth to, and is exercised by, the certain and infallible Spirit; which he is subject to be tempted to err from, further than he stands upon the watch; and cannot but err from, unless he feel a continual preservation in the fear, and by the power of the Lord. And the certainty of truth doth not depend so much upon the person from whom it is received, as upon the demonstration and evidence to the conscience wherein it is received. The apostles were not lords over the true Christians faith; but helpers of their joy. And Christ did not require his disciples to believe whatever he knew to be true; but prepared their capacities, and dropped in according to their capacities. And this is the way of the true ministers, to wait on God to beget, and on him again to water the begotten soul, and carry on his work in it; to make them know Christ their master, from whom they are to receive light, life, instruction, and direction; and to feel the head, and be joined to the head, and receive from the head their knowledge, as well the least as the greatest, *Heb. viii*. What is Paul? What is Apollos? What is Cephas? Were not they carnal that cried up these one above another? Yet the younger ought to be subject to the elder, and all to be subject one to another in the truth, *1 Pet. v. 5*.

Quest. 5. What was Peter?

Ans. One of the disciples of Christ, a precious stone in the building (*John i. 43*.) one of the most eminent apostles, even the chosen minister to

them of the circumcision, as Paul was to the Gentiles. But he knew that Christ was the only rock or foundation, as well as Paul, and that Christ alone was able to bear the weight of that building, and to defend it against the gates of hell; and he never had commission, nor can it be proved that he ever preached himself the rock, but he preached Christ the foundation-stone, the rock of offence, the rock of defence; &c. see 1 *Pet.* ii. 4. and *ver.* 6, 7, 8. And if an angel from heaven, or any man or church on earth, so interpret any scripture, as to hold forth any such thing, that any else besides Christ is the rock, they plainly shew that they are erred from the truth, and that their interpretation is of their own private spirit, and not that public Spirit which all the prophets of God, and apostles, and truly holy men, were guided by.

Quest. 6. Was the church always to be a gathered company? Or was there a possibility of their being scattered?

Answ. There was a possibility of their being scattered; yea, a certainty, if they grew corrupt in doctrine and practice, and kept not the faith, *Rom.* xi. For the Lord God intended a pure building, a spiritual building, fit to offer the spiritual sacrifices, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. An holy people, separated from the world, 2 *Cor.* vi. 17. in which he might dwell and walk, *ver.* 16. If therefore any church depart from the Spirit, and life, and power of the apostles, and mix again with the world, losing their own proper pale which fenced from the world, they soon lose that which maketh them a church of God, and so become a synagogue of Satan.

Now it is in my heart also to propound a few queries concerning the scattered and hidden estate and condition of the church, and concerning that church which got up in the view of the world, and was acknowledged by the world instead thereof afterwards.

Quest. 1. Whether the true church did retain her ministry outwardly, and her outward ordinances, and way of worship of the outward court, after her scattering? Or whether the false church, which appeared in her room as if she had been the true, caught up and appeared in the outwardness of these? The grounds of this query are these following?

1. Because, upon God's measuring of his temple and worshippers, the outward court (consider well what that is, and how far it extends) was left out of God's measure; so that he intended to reckon it no longer as his, but given by him to the Gentile Christians; such as were Christians or Jews in name, but Gentiles in spirit and nature, *Rev.* xi.

2. Because in the last days, when that strange generation of Christians was to spring up, who should be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false-accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; yet these should have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, 2 *Tim.* iii. 1, to 6. Now mind: the temple wherein was the

the power, God had removed with the true worshippers; but the outward court (wherein was the appearance of some kind of a form of a church, ministry, and ordinances) those had got, and were found worshipping in it, in the midst of all this great wickedness and abomination of spirit.

3. Because the Jews (who were the type) while they were in captivity in Babylon, could not sing the songs of Sion, nor had the worship of the outward Jerusalem there.

And can the spiritual Jews sing the spiritual songs of spiritual Sion, in Mystery-Babylon? No; there they are but witnesses to that life and power which the true church enjoyed and flourished with, in her built estate.

Quest. 2. Whether this is not an infallible mark, and most certain demonstration of the false church, her sitting upon many waters; which waters are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues? Did not the Spirit of the Lord thus mark her out to John, *Rev. xvii. 15.* Did the true church ever sit upon many waters? Was not the church a gathering out of the nations into the power and life which the nations persecuted? But the false church sits over the nations with a form of godliness, but without the true power thereof. Then if this be a mark that God hath set upon her, let every one wait to read it aright, that he may know thereby which is she, and praise the name of the Lord for discovering her to him.

Quest. 3. Whether this false church be not rightly called Babylon, even an heap of confusion (in a mystery) as to God's eye, though to man's eye her appearance may be orderly and decent? And whether she be not justly termed, by the Spirit of the Lord, the great whore, both for largeness in bulk, and for the greatness of her fornications, having whored from the bed of the husband, and entered into the bed of a stranger; and having taught and compelled others to acknowledge and worship in her forms; which, thus held forth and maintained by her, are not only without, but also against, the true power?

Quest. 4. Whether antichrist be not entered into, and become the head of, this false church? And whether he doth not sit there ruling in it, even as Christ was head of the true, and sat ruling in the true? And whether antichrist doth not keep his hold of this church, and possess his seat in it, for many ages and generations, even from the time he got in after the days of the apostles, till the very coming of Christ in his power and brightness?
2 Thess. ii.

Quest. 5. Whether the great plagues, woes, terrible thunders, and cups of God's indignation, spoken of in the book of the *Revelations*, are not to be poured, in their several orders and degrees, upon this false church, and upon antichrist, her beloved head and king, even till she be stripped naked, made desolate, and her flesh burnt with fire, and her head bruised and destroyed by Christ, the true head and king of the true church?

Quest. 6. Whether the people of God, such as feel somewhat of the power, and bow to the Lord in Spirit and truth in some measure; yet
K 2 these,

these, if they mind not his call out of this Babylon, and come not fully out of her, but abide in any part of her, observing any of her ways or worships, till the time of God's controversy with her, and judging of her, whether they also shall not partake of her plagues? *Rev. xviii. 4.*

Quest. 7. Whether all people have not great reason to fear before the Lord, and to look to their ways and worships, lest they be found in any thing therein which is not of him, but contrary to him, and so bring upon their souls and bodies that wrath and sore judgment from God, which they are not able to bear? *Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.*

Quest. 8. Whether it was not the great love and mercy of God to warn the churches of these things in the book of the *Revelations*? And whether he can be safe in these respects, who either doth not understand, or not observe, the warnings given by the Spirit of the Lord therein? How often is it therein said, *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit of God saith to the churches.* It is also said, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that bear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.* He then that readeth not, that hath not an ear to hear the words of this prophecy, how can he keep what is written therein? How can he beware and avoid the seeming beauty and glory of the false church, or suffer with the faithful witnesses of God in their testimony against her? And if he do not thus, but is entangled by the false church with her golden cup of fornications (*Rev. xvii. 4.*) he misbeth of the blessing; and ah! what is he to meet with instead thereof! My heart hath often melted within me, and my bowels rolled at the consideration and deep sense which the Lord hath given me of these things; and this I say therein, to those that desire life and peace from God, Oh! wait on him for the eye which sees in his light, for the ear which hears his voice, and for the heart which understands the words and messages of his Spirit, that ye may feel his gathering, guidance, and preservation out of that, to which his wrath is for ever, and against which his wrath is to be made more manifest, and poured out more fully and abundantly than ever it yet was. For the Lord will empty his love and his life into Sion, and empty the very dregs and thick mixtures of the cups of his indignation into the very heart and bowels of Babylon; and her sickness, misery, woe, death, and destruction will be exceeding dreadful and unutterable. Therefore wait on the Lord in fear and singleness of spirit, crying and mourning unto him to discover to you the extent and limits of this false church, this false building, this building in a form and outward order, without the life and power of the Spirit; and then fly as fast out of her, and from her (and as far) as the Spirit of the Lord leads, even till ye come to the holy building, which is of him, and the heavenly places which are prepared there by him, for every one of his (according to their growth and stature in his Son) that ye may sit down in him.

Some **QUERIES** to **PROFESSORS**, who speak of high Attainments and Experiences in Religion, and yet do not witness, nor can acknowledge, the Truth, as the **LORD** hath now revealed it (and done great things by it in the Spirits of his People), but look upon it as a poor, mean, and low thing.

Query 1. **H**AVE ye known the great and terrible day of the Lord, wherein he ariseth to shake terribly the earth? And have ye known that shaken down in you which must be shaken down and removed as a cottage, before the everlasting kingdom can be established in you?

Query 2. Do ye know the living, powerful, eternal word, which is quick and piercing, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing between thought and thought, grace and grace (as I may so speak), light and light, life and life, spirit and spirit, power and power? &c. Have ye known it an hammer, a fire, an axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree? And do ye know the corrupt tree (root, branches, leaves, and fruit) so cut down by it as to cumber the ground no more?

Query 3. Do ye know the paradise of God, and the tree of life there? Do ye indeed feed thereon? Have you passed through the flaming sword to the tree of life? And is the flaming sword (which once fenced from life, and the power thereof) set now to fence up the way to the tree of knowledge, that ye may feed no more thereon, and die, but feed only on that which is life, and gives life, and so live for ever?

Query 4. Have ye witnessed the effects of the great and terrible day of the Lord in your spirits? Is antichrist destroyed, the whore burnt, flesh consumed, man ceased from, both within and without? Is the loftiness of man bowed down in you, the mighty removed out of his seat, and the meek, holy, humble seed raised up to rule in righteousness in your hearts? Is every high tower battered down, and every fenced wall laid flat? Are all your imaginations, and conceivings, and fleshly apprehendings upon scriptures, yea, every pleasant picture and image of the things in heaven (formed in your minds) brought to an end, and the pure living truth of the Father waited for, received from him, and lived in? Yea, is the Lord alone exalted in your spirits, and all other dominion, authority, rule, and lordship put under?

Query 5. Do ye know the mountain of the Lord's house, and the Lord's house built and established by his own Holy Spirit and power upon his own
holy

holy mountain? And do ye worship the Lord alone therein? Do ye come up to the New Jerusalem, to offer your sacrifices there, according to the institution of the gospel? And do ye worship the Lord there, on his own day, which he hath spiritually made? And do ye bear no burden, kindle no fire, do no work on that his day? Do ye never warm yourselves at any fire, or by any sparks of your own kindling? Or are ye yet worshipping upon some of the many mountains and hills which the Lord hath not formed nor established; but have been formed and set up by man in the night of darkness, before the everlasting light of the day brake forth?

Query 6. Do ye know the wilderness through which the passage is from Egypt to Canaan? And have ye faithfully travelled in the leadings of God's Spirit there-through? And are ye entered into the pure rest thereof? Are ye not under the law, but under grace; not under the enemy's power, but under the Spirit's power, out of the other's reach, so that the wicked-one cannot touch you? Have ye gone through the exercises and trials of the wilderness? Have ye fed on the manna dropt down from heaven upon your spirits therein? Have ye drunk of the water of the rock? Have ye seen the serpent lifted up, and felt the healing thereby? Have ye witnessed the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, to be your defence and leader? And have ye now at length received the kingdom of life, and sit under the shadow of it, drinking water out of your own cistern, and eating under your own vine and fig-tree the fruits of the good land, after the shaking of that which was to be shaken; now being come to, and enjoying the kingdom which cannot be shaken? Have ye really felt these things, or have ye been in the dreams and imaginings about them?

Query 7. Do ye walk in the light of the Lord, as the spiritual house of Jacob is to do? Have ye received the Spirit? Do ye live in the Spirit? Are ye truly united, so as to become one spirit with the Lord? Are all the walls of partition broken down? And is there nothing now between you, but of two ye are made one in that which uniteth?

If it be thus with you, then hold forth the right-hand of fellowship to those whom the Lord hath brought hither; and know and acknowledge that whereby the Lord hath wrought it in them. But if ye be not really in the thing itself, but only in the apprehensions and conceivings about it, ye can never so be witnesses concerning these things, nor concerning the truth whereby God works these things: and ye will find there is a great gulf between you and us, which ye cannot possibly pass over, till ye meet with our principle and guide, and faithfully travel with him in the footsteps of the flock, that ye may come to the shepherd's tents (even the tents which the shepherd pitcheth, and which no man can pitch) and may know the true tabernacle, sanctuary, and temple, whereof he is the minister.

OF THE
C H U R C H,
IN ITS
FIRST and PURE STATE,

I N
Its Declining STATE, in its Declined STATE,
and in its RECOVERY.

WITH THE
WAY of SALVATION in the COVENANT of LIFE opened,
AND
Some STUMBLING-BLOCKS Removed out of the Way of the
SIMPLE-HEARTED.
Likewise some QUERIES concerning the NEW COVENANT.

WITH
An EXHORTATION to all People; but more especially to such as
are Desolate and Distressed.
By one who testifieth what he hath seen, and heard, and tasted; and handled
of the Word, and Life Eternal,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

Whereunto is added,

A Visit of tender and upright Love to such as retain a Sincerity towards the
L O R D.

Also, A brief Account of the Ground of Certainty and Satisfaction, which it hath
pleased the LORD to establish in my Heart, concerning Religion, and the Things
of his Kingdom.

And a QUESTION answered, about the Way of knowing the Motions, Doctrines,
and Teachings of CHRIST'S Spirit.

With somewhat relating to the GOSPEL-REST, or SABBATH.

And some QUERIES to such as complain of Want of Power to become the LORD'S,
and serve him.



THE true church is a mystery, and so is the false also; neither of which the outward eye of man's understanding is able to discern; but he alone who is enlightened and taught of God. Who can see how the Spirit of God works, changing mens hearts, gathering them into his truth, and building them up into an holy temple in his Son? And who can discern how the spirit of deceit works with an outward knowledge, doctrine, and form of religion, persuading or compelling men thereunto, and so builds up a false church? Yea, who can tell when the Spirit of the Lord withdraweth from a church, which was once his, leaving it to the other spirit to re-enter and possess; from which time it becometh a synagogue of Satan? There was need of the anointing of God's wisdom and Spirit to try Jews and Apostles (for there were such, even in the apostles days, as said they were so, but were not); and there is also need of the same wisdom and Spirit to try churches, whether they be indeed the churches of Christ (in and of his Spirit and power), or only in the name and outward profession of the thing, without the nature, Spirit, life, and power thereof.

The apostle Paul (who was the apostle of the Gentiles, and knew what was likely to be their future state) writing to the Romans, tells them, that the Gentiles were cut out of the olive-tree, which was wild by nature; and were, contrary to nature, ingrafted into the true olive-tree, and so came to partake of the root and fatness thereof. But withal he tells them, that unless they did continue in the faith, and in the goodness of God, keeping out of the high-mindedness and conceitedness of their own estate and condition, in the fear (which makes the heart clean, and preserves it in the cleanness from that which would defile, and cause it to depart from the Lord) they likewise should be cut off, *Rom. xi. 17. and 20, &c.*

Now it would seriously be considered, whether the Gentile churches did abide in the faith, and in the goodness and power of the Lord, which gathered them? Or whether they grew high-minded, holding their estate in a pre-

presumption (as if the promise was so to them, that they must needs be the church for ever) out of the fear, and so was cast off by God, and cut off (according to the apostle's words) from God's Spirit, and so have not partook of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree, for many generations? It would also farther be enquired (if it prove thus, upon true search and examination, that they have been cut off); whether they can partake of the root and fatness of the true Olive-tree any more, till he that cast them off, gather and build them up again?

It is true, there have been witnesses against the corrupt state, even a seed who have been persecuted by it; and these have, in some measure, partook of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree, all this time of the degeneration. But hath the church-state of the Gentiles, which provoked God, and was cast off, and persecuted the witnesses of the Lamb, his holy seed, who could not but, in his nature and Spirit, testify against their corruption? Have they partook of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree, or have they not rather grown up from, and drunk in of, the sap and juice of another stock?

The same apostle speaks of the man of sin, that wicked one, the son of perdition; who should get into the temple of God, sit there, and shew himself as God; and yet oppose and exalt himself above all that is truly called God, and that of right ought to be worshipped, *2 Thes. ii. 4.* Now when he gets into the temple, doth not he leaven it with his wicked spirit, making it become wicked, like him that sits and reigns in it, and is the head of it? And not the church or temple, all the while he sits in it, partake of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree? (Of Christ its former vine, of Christ its former head)? Or doth it not rather suck in, and partake of, the venom and poison of this new head? And how long is this new head, this false head of the church, to sit in the temple? Is it not from the very time of his getting in, till Christ, by the Spirit of his mouth, consume and scatter him; and by the brightness of his appearance and coming utterly destroy him? *ver. 8.*

This is certain (as certain as ever there was a true church in the days of the apostles), that after the apostles days there got up a false church, which the Spirit of the Lord calls the great whore (indeed she was far bigger, by multitudes of degrees, than ever the true church was). This great whore had a golden cup in her hand, wherewith she made the kings and inhabitants of the earth drunk. And she sat upon many waters; which waters are peoples, nations, multitudes, and tongues. Did ever the true church do thus? That was a little flock, gathered out of peoples, nations, multitudes, and tongues, reigning in the Spirit and power of the Lord, over them only who were thus gathered; but never sat upon whole peoples, nations, multitudes, and tongues, as this great whore hath done, *Rev. xvii. 1.—15.*

Now it would be worth the enquiry what this cup is (this golden cup, which appears like gold)? And what this wine is, wherewith she made the kings and inhabitants of the earth drunk? Ask her, and she will tell you,

It is the cup of salvation, and her wine the wine of the kingdom; even the doctrine and discipline of holy mother-church; out of which, and without which, no man can be saved. But ask the Spirit of the Lord (or hear what the Spirit of the Lord said to the churches concerning it) and he will tell you, it is the wine of fornication, the cup of destruction, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication; and that she shall be so far from saving others, that she shall be destroyed and perish herself; and whoever drinks of her wine shall perish, unless he vomit it up again, and drink of the pure blood of the Lamb after it. See *Rev.* xvii. and also chap. xviii. and chap. xiv. 9, 10, 11.

Now one word, in the love and truth of God, to all that have separated from this church. Have ye separated fully? Have ye separated wholly? Have ye separated from her in nature and spirit? Have ye waited for the building which God alone can rear; for the church which he alone can frame? Or have ye built up another church, in the resemblance and likeness of that ye separated from? This is a weighty thing: Ye must answer it to God, and stand by his judgment therein. I beseech you consider it. *What will it profit a man, saith Christ, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* So say I in this Case: What would it profit you, if ye could make your church stand, and be approved in the sight of the whole world, if the Lord disown and disallow it, and they that are gathered into it perish by it? If it be not of God's building, if it have not his presence, virtue, Spirit and power in it, it cannot save. Oh! hear, hear! for the Lord will strip Babylon, and fill her with dreadful plagues and judgments; and she shall appear naked as she is, and become the scorn of every eye, and the reproach of every beholder: and that which hath been reproached, scorned, hated, and persecuted by her, the Lord will honour.

Now consider, and wait on the Lord, to know the extent of Babylon; that ye may not be found by the Spirit of the Lord (nor by his angels, which pour out his plagues upon her) within her limits. For the Great Whore is not Babylon only, or alone; but she is the Mother of harlots, and all her Daughters are harlots also; even all that have built up churches, like her (in her spirit, with her materials) out of the leading, guidance, and power of the Spirit of truth. 7 AP 59

O F T H E

C H U R C H.

- I. Of the CHURCH in its First and Pure State, when it was cloathed with the Sun, had the Moon under its Feet, and was crowned with the Crown of Twelve Stars, travailing to Bring-forth, and Brought-forth the Man-Child, which was to Rule all Nations with the Rod of Iron.

IT pleased the Father to send his Son into the world (in his name, power, and authority), to gather out of the world ; and to manifest his name to the men whom he should gather out of the world. The Jews (for all their great profession, and high esteem of themselves) were but a worldly polity, having but worldly, elementary shadows of the good things to come, and to be set up in the kingdom of the Messiah. John preached, *That the kingdom was at hand* ; Christ said, *It was come* : John prepared for it ; Christ brought it. He came in the Spirit, in the life, in the virtue, in the dominion of the Most High ; and he gathered disciples unto him, by the word and power of the Father. And those that continued in his word, were his disciples indeed ; of his gathering ; such as the Father had sent the Son out to seek ; even the new sort of worshippers, who should worship neither at Samaria, nor Jerusalem ; nor with reference to any other outward place ; but in Spirit and in truth. They should meet together in that name, wherein Christ had gathered them ; and meeting so, he would be in the midst of them, and they should feel the presence, power, and authority, which belonged to his church.

Now, if any would know what kind of persons these disciples are, Christ giveth many descriptions of them. They are such as are born from above, such as are changed by the name and power which gathers them. They are Jews inward, circumcised inwardly ; such as are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire ; squared stones, hewn by the Spirit, for the spiritual building ; not old, rough, fierce, cruel, implacable, unregenerate, unholy spirits ; but meek, gentle, lowly, tender, poor in spirit, merciful,

ciful, peaceable in themselves, and making peace among men, renewed, and sanctified in spirit; holy in conversation, suffering (both from the heathenish, and from the worldly-professing spirit) for that power of truth and righteousness, which they profess and bear witness to. They are the salt of the earth, having that in them which seasoneth their own hearts, and which hath virtue in it to season others. They are the light of the world, having that in them which casts rays of light, conviction, and demonstration, where-ever they go. They being changed into the leaven of the kingdom, become a leaven, and so a weight upon iniquity; testifying against, yea, bowing down and afflicting that spirit, as the power of life springs in them and breaks forth through them.

Now, if the church be thus; if it be a gathering by the power into the power; by Christ, who came in the name, into the name in which he came; must not the ministry needs be much more thus? Must not they be grown in the name, be grown in the power, who are to minister to those who are gathered into the name, who are gathered into the power? Must not they be well grown in the Spirit, if they be able ministers of the Spirit? Did not Christ, when he sent out his disciples to preach in his name, give them of his Spirit and power? And afterwards, when he was to go away, and they to succeed him, what were they to succeed him in? Were they not to succeed him in his Spirit and power? And did not he bid them wait for it, and receive it, before they went forth to preach and set up his kingdom? And was it not by this the church was gathered? And can the church be preserved by any thing beneath this? Yea, falling short of this, is it not in a degenerated and fallen estate?

After that those who had been gathered in the name, had waited as Christ directed them, for the holy Spirit and power, and after it had fallen upon them, then the glory began, then the ministry shined, then the church (or people gathered in the Spirit and power) shined; then great life was in them all, then great grace and holiness was upon them all, then faith (which springs from the Spirit and power) was fresh, then love abounded; then they minded not earthly things, but the kingdom, the life, the glory, which was come upon them in power; then Satan's kingdom fell down like lightening, and they went on (in and with the Spirit which led them) conquering the Jewish professors, and the Heathenish worshippers also; none being able to resist the power and Spirit wherein they spake and ministered. Read the scriptures of the New-Testament, and wait on God for the opening of the true eye in you; and these things will be manifest and plain to you therein; for the sweetness, freshness, preciousness, and beauty of that state, may abundantly be read there, by those whose eyes the Lord opens. To instance in some places.

Peter writes two general epistles, in one whereof he speaks of their having received like precious faith with them, 2 *Peter* i. 1. and in the other, that they did rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 *Peter* i. 8.

Yea,

Yea, he speaks also of their being as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood (mark; all God's people who are gathered into the name, who are of the faith, who are in the life and power, are priests unto him) to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, *1 Peter ii. 5.* Now was it a small thing to be a priest under the law, to offer up the outward sacrifices thereof? What is it then to be a priest in the Holy Spirit and power of life?

John also writes a general epistle, wherein he divides Christians into three estates (children, young men, fathers), speaking great things and glorious of them all. He said, *The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.* Paul had said, *The night is far spent, and the day is at hand;* but he said, *the night is past, and the day is come,* *1 John ii. 8.* And he writes to all (children, young men, fathers), as being passed from the darkness, and in the light of the day. The little children had had their sins forgiven them for his name's sake, and had known the Father, *ver. 12, 13.* The young men were strong, and the word of God did abide in them, and they had overcome the wicked one, *ver. 14.* The fathers knew him that was from the beginning, *ver. 13, 14.* and knowing that, they knew enough; for that was it which appeared to save, and that was it which was to be preached, even that which was from the beginning, the light which was with God, the light which was in God, the light which was God, in which is no darkness at all, *chap. i. 1. 5.* Yea the little children had an unction from the Holy One, and they knew all things; and John wrote not unto them as not knowing the truth, but because they knew it, *chap. ii. 18. 20, 21.* Yea, they had received the anointing, and it did abide in them, and they needed not that any man should teach them, but as the same anointing taught them of all things; and it so taught them, as that no seducer nor antichristian deceiver could impose or prevail upon them, they keeping to it, *ver. 18.—26, 27.* What a glorious state was here when the little children were thus advanced in the strength and power of life? Sure that promise was now made good indeed, *Ye shall be all taught of God,* when the little children were thus taught. Yea, and they were taught to abide in him, so as they might not sin; for how could they, the anointing abiding in them, and teaching them of all things, and they being in subjection thereto; for that preserves out of sin the vessel in whom it dwells and reigns. Sin is a transgression of the law; but they that are in the anointing, taught by the anointing, subject to the anointing, are far above the righteousness of the law, even in the righteousness of the Son; the righteousness of whose nature is far above the righteousness which the law requires of man's nature. And let men talk and imagine what they will, the sinner is not in the redemption and power of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ. For that which is born of God doth not commit sin, but the seed remaineth in him which is born of God, preserving him from the nature and spirit of the Devil, and from the works which flow from that nature

nature and spirit, *chap. iii. 4. &c.* Yea, they might so walk as that their hearts should not condemn them; but that they might have confidence towards God, *ver. 20, 21.* And as Christ said to the Father; *Father, thou always hearest me;* so could they say, *Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight,* *ver. 22.* even as Christ had said; *He that sent me is with me, &c. for I do always those things that please him,* *John viii. 29.* Yea, these little children, having received the anointing, were able to try spirits, and had tried and overcome them (notwithstanding the subtilty and strength of all their deceits), because that light, life, Spirit, and power which dwelt within them, was greater than that which was in the world, *chap. iv. 1, 4.* And can the less overcome the greater, the greater keeping to its strength? Nay, nay: These that are of the love, and dwell in the love, are (by the power and virtue of the love) kept out of all the snares and devices of the enmity; for the enmity cannot enter the love, nor the soul that abides in the love; but only him that departs out of it. Here is a munition of rocks, here is safety indeed; let him that hath an ear hear, and let him that hath a spiritual eye read and consider. What should be said more of them? They were in the love which keeps the commandments of the birth to which the victory is given, and in the faith which gives the victory, *chap. v. 3, 4.* Yea, did they not so keep themselves, as that the wicked one could not touch them? *ver. 18.* How could he, when they had overcome him, and abode in that which overcame him? Satan falls like a flash of lightening before the power of truth, before the living faith; the faith which is from, and stands in, the power. And if the Devil would fly from those that resisted him, how much more would he fly from those that had overcome him, and stood armed with that armour which is painful and dreadful to him?

Again, the apostle that writeth to the Hebrews, speaketh of their work and labour of love (which advanceth the soul apace towards the kingdom), and of their patient enduring the trials, persecutions, afflictions, and crosses (through which perfection is attained, *James i. 4.*) *Heb. vi. 10.* and *chap. x. 32, 33.* Yea, he speaketh expressly concerning them, that they were come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, *chap. xii. 22, 23, 24.* and that they had received, or were receiving, a kingdom which could not be moved, *ver. 28.*

There is another place in my heart to mention, which speaks great glory and an high state, in the sense of my spirit, attributing glory and dominion to Christ for his loving them, and washing them from their sins in his own blood, and making them kings and priests unto God and his Father,

Rev.

Of the Church in its first and pure State. 79

Rev. i. 5, 6. What is he who is both a king and priest to God? Surely he is washed, surely he is cloathed with the priest's raiment, surely he is in the dominion and purity of life, who reigns and offers up therein holy sacrifices to the Father.

Thus far have instances been given in reference to the general state. Now it is also in my heart to give some instances in particular churches, wherein testimony is given to the freshness of life in them, and of their precious state therein.

First, I shall instance in that church at *Jerusalem*: In what a beauteous glory and lustre did they spring forth! *Acts ii. 41.* to the end. Consider the place well, and tell me, if this was not the beginning of the spiritual and heavenly *Jerusalem*; if the glory of it did not descend upon this new-gathered people and converts? So likewise see *chap. iv. 31, &c.*

The church at *Rome*, the apostle Paul says, were beloved of God; and that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world, *Rom. i. 7, 8.* Now what a glorious precious state was this! For by faith is water drawn out of the wells of salvation: And how much might they draw, who abounded in faith! True faith springs from the power of life, and it brings the power of life into the soul in which it springs, according to the degree and growth of it. He that is beloved of God, and abounds in faith towards him; what glory, what life, what virtue, what power can he want?

The same apostle, writing to the church at *Philippi*, saith, he did thank God, upon every remembrance of them; making request for them with joy always, in every prayer of his for them all, for their fellowship in the gospel (which is power and life to them that have fellowship therein) from the first day until now, *Phil. i. 3, 4, 5.* And he calls them dearly beloved and longed-for, his joy and crown, *chap. iv. 1.*

So writing to the saints and faithful brethren at *Colossus*, he gives thanks for their faith, and their love to all the saints, *chap. i. 3, 4.* And saith further concerning them; that the word of the truth of the gospel had brought forth fruit in them, since the day they heard and knew the grace of God in truth, *ver. 5, 6.* To what then were they grown? Surely very far into the mystery of life in Christ; in whom they had been circumcised and baptized, and were complete, abiding in him, and drinking in of the life, virtue, and power which floweth from him.

Likewise he writes to the church of the *Thessalonians*, as being in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, *1 Thess. i. 1.* Ah! how excellent and glorious was the state and condition of Christ, to be in the Father! How glorious is the state of that church, which is both in Christ and in the Father! He speaks also of their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, *verse 3.* Yea, he writes to them again as such, *2 Ephef. i. 1.* Surely they did abide in the vine; they did dwell in the name and power into which they were gathered; and so did feel the dews from above, and the springs from beneath; so that their faith did grow exceedingly, and their

80 *Of the Church in its declining and falling Estate.*

their love abound; and the apostles did find cause of glorying in them, in the churches of God, for their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations that they endured, *ver. 3, 4.*

Writing also to the Ephesians, he giveth an high expression of the goodness of God to his people in those days, and of the blessedness of their estate, in that God had blessed them *with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ*, chap. i. 3. That is hard to be understood; yet this may be sensibly said: In the heavenly places in Christ, the spiritual blessings are received; and they that are raised together with him, and live in and with him, do also sit with him in the heavenly places in him, even in the mansions which he hath prepared, and is preparing; for he raiseth the soul higher and higher, from glory to glory, at his pleasure. The apostle also saith, that they were *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*; and were *built together in Christ, for an habitation of God, through the Spirit*, chap. ii. 19. 22.

So the church of Smyrna; Christ owneth her works, and tribulations, and poverty, and pronounceth her rich, *Rev. ii. 8.* Christ knoweth how to value things.

And the church of Philadelphia was in a very precious state indeed; Christ owning her works, and having set before her an open door, which no man could shut; and promising to make those who made a profession of the truth (of being Jews) but were not in it, to come and worship before her feet, and to know that he had loved her; as also that he would keep her in the hour of temptation, because she had kept the word of his patience, *Rev. iii. 8, &c.* Thus it is manifest that the church in general, and many churches in particular, was once in a pure, fresh, living, powerful glorious state.

II. *Of the Church in its declining and falling Estate.*

BUT all the churches were not thus; nor did those who were thus always continue thus: but there was a declining and falling from this glorious estate by degrees, even from the light, brightness, purity and power of the day, into the darkness and corruption of the night again.

And thus the apostasy came in; to wit, by not keeping to the anointing, by not abiding in that Spirit, life, and power whereinto they were gathered; by not keeping singly to the voice of the Shepherd. For then another ear got up in them, and that itched after new and strange things; not being contented with the simplicity of truth which is in Christ, with the plain heavenly bread. For truth is a naked simple thing to look at; not answering man's wisdom at first, nor ever afterwards: but in the cross to that its power
is

Of the Church in its declining and falling Estate. 81

is felt, and its beauty seen. But if the wisdom of man get up from under the cross, if it be not still kept down by that, it will presently be judging the wisdom of God and the plain way of truth foolishness, and be listening after somewhat else.

Thus the church of Corinth, who did abound in spiritual gifts, yet were apt to run out, and be lifted up above their measures, and think they reigned as kings, without (if not beyond) the apostles; and so came into danger of hearkening to false spirits and ministers of unrighteousness, 1 Cor. iv. 8, &c. 2 Cor. x. xi.

And the churches of Galatia, which began well, and very zealously, even so as they could have plucked out their eyes for Paul's sake; yet were afterwards so far bewitched and prevailed upon, that the apostle professed he stood in doubt of them, and was afraid lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain, Gal. iv. 11. 20.

When the enemy could not prevail in open battle, by manifest afflictions, oppositions, persecutions, &c. then he tries by deceit, getting into the form, to see what he can do there, how he can please and satisfy men therewith, and so work them from that power which redeems. And those that do not eye the power, keep to the power, walk in the power, and judge by the power, to be sure he catcheth this way. *The false prophets, saith Christ, which come in sheep's clothing* (with the good words, as ministers of righteousness; but not with the living powerful fruits of righteousness) come with so subtil an appearance, as, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect: but God keepeth that eye in his elect open, which cannot be deceived; but all else are. They that depart from the power, they that err from the faith, they that are in the high-mindedness and conceitedness, out of the fear, they easily hearken to seducing spirits, and drink off their poison. And Peter plainly foresaw that these would be many, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

See also what complaint Paul makes to Timothy, about the declining of many from the truth; he exhorts him to *keep faith and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander*, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.

Again he speaks of some that were *already turned aside after Satan*, chap. v. 15. And of some that had *erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows*, chap. vi. 10. Again: *All they which are in Asia be turned away from me*, 2 Tim. i. 15. Likewise he speaks of some, who would *increase unto more ungodliness*, and whose word will eat as doth a canker, chap. ii. 16, 17. and that *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*, chap. iii. 13. Yea, *the time will come*, saith he, *when they will not endure sound doctrine*, chap. iv. 3. *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world*, verse 10. *Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works*, verse 14. *At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me*, verse 16. Surely

82 *Of the Church in its declining and falling Estate.*

love was grown very cold, iniquity likely to abound, and the apostasy from the truth to increase.

And among the churches of *Asia*, how many of them were warping! *Ephesus*, though she had much good remaining in her, yet she had left her first love, and was fallen from her first state and works, *Rev. ii. 4, 5*. *Pergamus* also had them which held the doctrine of the *Nicholaitans*, which thing Christ hated, *verse 15*. *Thyatira*, she likewise suffered the woman *Jezabel*, which called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce God's servants, *verse 20*. (Now this she ought not to have done, the churches having the Spirit, the holy anointing, to try spirits and prophets by; yea to try Apostles; which will faithfully discover which are truly such, and which are not, as *verse 2*.) *Sardis* had a name that she lived, but was generally dead; there being but a few names left in *Sardis*, which had not defiled their garments, *chap. iii. 1, 4*. *Laodicea* was lukewarm; neither cold nor hot; in the profession, in the form and appearance of truth; but without zeal, without life, without power, *verse 15*. Now being in this state (having the form and appearance of all) she judged herself rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing, *verse 17*. This indeed is a pleasant state in man's eye, but very loathsome to God, *verse 16*. This church seemed to have all, but indeed had lost all, and wanted the gold, the raiment, and the eye-salve; and so was wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, *ver. 17, 18*.

In this declining state some fell from the doctrine of truth, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, *1 Tim. iv. 1*. Some from the fellowship and worship; it being the manner of some to forsake the assembling themselves together, *Heb. x. 25*; which the church, when first gathered, was very diligent in, *Acts ii. 42, 46*. Some held the form of knowledge and profession, but fell from the life and power, *2 Tim. iii. 5*. Yea many ways did the wolfish false spirits drive and scatter from the flock, as they could get entrance into mens minds.

Object. But how could the church decline thus in the Apostles days; the Spirit of God being so powerful in the Apostles, and being also so generally then bestowed upon believers? as *Gal. iv. 6*.

Ans. It is true, they had great advantages of standing, by reason of the presence and power of the Spirit with them. But yet withal, the Spirit of the Lord is tender, jealous, and might be grieved and provoked by neglects (his warnings being slighted, and his motions quenched) and so might draw back from such, as either received not the truth in the love of it, or grew cold and careless afterwards; and then the spirit of darkness and deceit thereby had advantage to blind them, gain upon them, and enter into that part of them, which the Spirit of the Lord had before recovered and possessed. Now the enemy having got entrance, prevails and captivates more and more, unless the Lord in tender love and mercy visit it again, lifting up a standard for the soul, and so drawing it back by degrees into his light and power again.

Besides,

Of the declined and fallen State of the Church. 83

Besides, it is easy to decline (easy for any soul, easy for any church); but there is need of much care, fear, faith, obedience, watchfulness to the Lord, and against the enemy, &c. to preserve and keep the estate of an heart, or the estate of a church, chaste and pure. *Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.* Can any thing preserve a soul, or church, but God's power? And doth God preserve any soul, or church, but in the way he hath appointed? A church is like a garden; needs digging, dressing, watering and sun-shine, to cause it to thrive and flourish. Do not weeds easily spring up in a garden? yea, ranker weeds than in common ground; which spread apace and over-run it faster, if it be not looked to and kept by the Gardener? Read the figure, and understand. Are not spiritual weeds as corrupt and spreading as the outward? Are they not like leaven; have they not a poisonous, infecting nature in them? *Know ye not, saith the apostle, that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?* 1 Cor. v. 6. If but one root of bitterness spring up in a church, it may defile many, and trouble the whole, *Heb. xii. 15.* And as one corrupted person, so also one corrupted church, may infect and poison many more. Yea, was it not thus in the apostasy? When it once got head, did it not break in and overflow apace?

III. Of the declined and fallen State of the Church.

WHEN antichrist (or that spirit which wrought against that spiritual appearance of Christ, and power of his truth) was revealed, and got into the temple, appearing and being acknowledged there as God, then (without controversy) was the declined state. He had been a long while working under-ground by his agents and ministers, appearing as ministers of righteousness, in a form thereof, out of, and against the power; but the power (in the true apostles and ministers) stood in his way, and wrought against him, so as he could not for a long time get up. Yet he prevailed more and more in the corrupt part in men, till at length he drew many (of the very stars from heaven) after him; and then fighting an open battle, gets rid of the true church, vomits out a flood after her (as if she were an harlot, and not worthy the name of Christ's spouse) and so gets into the temple, and is owned there (as Christ) in the stead of Christ.

Object. Will any man own antichrist, worship antichrist, and acknowledge antichrist (instead of Christ) to be God?

Ans. Read 2 Thess. ii. 4. and see if it be not so. See if he do not get into the temple, and sit ruling and governing in the temple (that which was once so, and ought still to be so) till the very coming and appearing of Christ in his Spirit and brightness, ver. 8.

Quest. But how could this possibly ever be, or how can it be?

84 *Of the declined and fallen State of the Church.*

Answer. He doth not directly get up, nor shew himself directly as he is; but in a mystery of deceit. He doth not appear as antichrist (crying up all manner of filthiness, abomination, and contrariety to Christ, in direct words), but as Christ, preaching righteousness, crying up scriptures, ordinances, church-ministry, holiness, &c. Yet, for all these words and fair pretences, he is not the true spirit, but the false, the antichristian; and those that receive him, or bow to him in any of these, they bow not to Christ, but to him. He hath a mark, he hath a name, he hath a worship, he hath a church, he hath a ministry, he hath laws and ordinances of worship; which whosoever receives, worships not the Lord Jesus Christ, but that spirit which under a disguise thus appeareth, which hath horns as it were of a lamb, or like a lamb; but not the Lamb's horns, nor the Lamb's nature, nor the Lamb's Spirit, nor the Lamb's meekness; but the old nature of the dragon, who gives him both subtilty and power.

Now mark: when Christ brought forth his church, it was a pure, holy, spiritual building, built up of renewed spirits; such as were new-born, such as were washed, such as were sanctified, such as were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Christ's church was Sion, even the holy seed, built upon the holy hill of God, into an holy city or temple. But antichrist's church is Babylon, which hath the wisdom and order of man in it, such as man's eye judgeth right, but is foolishness and confusion in the eye of God. Now the Lord hath most terrible plagues to pour out upon this antichrist, and upon his Babylon; yea, upon every one that hath his mark or name, or that which amounts to his name, though it be not directly so called. Therefore, oh! fear the Lord God! and ye that love the peace of your souls, pray to be delivered from that which his wrath is to; for the dregs of the cup of trembling are to be poured out on antichrist inward and outward, and on Babylon inward and outward. Let him that readeth understand the tender warnings, which are given forth in the tender nature and Spirit of the Lord; for the day of mercy spreads apace, and the night of anguish and tribulation hastens.

The true church of Christ was gathered by his Spirit into his name and power, and was a spiritual building, or building of spirits therein; wherein the Spirit of the Lord was as present spiritually, as ever he appeared in the outward temple or ark outwardly. And the ministers of the New Testament were made by the Spirit, and sent forth by the Spirit, and in the power. *Stephen* (though but a deacon) *was full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost*; and if any man taught in the church, he was to *speak as an oracle of God*. Flesh is to be silent there, and only the Spirit's voice to be heard in the spiritual building. But now in the apostasy, the ministers there are as wells without water, clouds without rain, who have only the shew of the thing after the flesh, but not the truth of the thing after the Spirit; and so being not in the thing, nor in the Spirit, they despise the dominion, and
speak

Of the declined and fallen State of the Church. 85

Speak evil of the dignities which are of the Spirit, and for advantage sake cry up the dominions and dignities which are of the earth.

In the apostles days the ministers of the church were not of man, nor set over the flock by man; but made by God, and set over the flock as overseers by him, *Acts* xx. 28. For the same Lord who gave apostles, prophets, and evangelists, gave also pastors and teachers, *Ephes.* iv. 11. And though the hands of the Presbytery were laid on those that were made ministers; yet that was not done suddenly, or lightly, but by the guidance of God's Spirit; and there went a gift and power of the Spirit along with it, according as Paul said to Timothy, *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery,* 1 Tim. iv. 14. But now, in the declined fallen estate, there is no such thing; but an empty form, a form of worship, a form of godliness, a form of ministry, a form of doctrine, a form of discipline; without the life, without the Spirit, without the power, from which the true form came, and whereby alone it could be preserved.

This declined state hath been a very sink of iniquity, wherein the Christian love hath not only grown cold, but hath been quite dead, and plucked up by the very roots; yea, wherein all that filthiness which was sprouting forth and getting up in the declining state had reigned in power, defiling the very name of Christianity, oppressing the good seed, and corrupting the earth. Read 2 Tim. iii. 2, &c. and see what a generation of Christian professors were to grow up (and did grow up) in the time of the apostasy.

IV. Of the State of the Church in its Recovery; or what State the Church shall be in after it is recovered out of the Apostasy.

THE state of the church *after* the apostasy, is to be like the state it was in *before* the apostasy (for purity, power, brightness, and glory, &c.); yea, shall it not be more glorious, after its coming through all this darkness, and shining over it, than it was before? The New Jerusalem is to come down from God out of heaven; the bride is to be clothed and adorned as the Lamb's wife, meet for the delight of her husband. The power and Spirit of the Lord, which cleanseth away all this rubbish, will make his truth shine, his church shine, his suffering lambs (that come out of the great tribulation) shine more than ever before. The Lord God Omnipotent will take his great power unto him to reign; and will reign according to his power in the hearts of his children, and over the earth. He will break that which stands in his way with a rod of iron; and he will embrace and exalt

36 *Of the State of the Church in its Recovery.*

exalt that which boweth to and kisseth the scepter of his Son, who is to appear upon the holy hill of Sion: and the Law is to go forth out of Sion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem; the power whereof shall break down the power of iniquity, and bring up the suffering seed into the dominion and glory of life.

In this restored estate antichrist shall be worshipped no more, nor the beast, nor the dragon, who gave his power to the beast; but the Lord God shall be worshipped and magnified over all. It shall be said no more, *Who can make war with the Beast? after the Lamb hath overcome him; But, Who is like to thee, O Lord, O king of saints, who hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned, and dost reign; who hast brought down this lofty city, and trod it under the feet of the poor, and made the steps of the needy to pass over it; who hast made it an heap (the city fenced by all the might, wisdom, and power of man) a ruinous heap, a place no more for thy dear children to be captived in and oppressed; but an habitation of dragons, and a cage of every unclean and noisome bird for ever?—Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest,* Rev. xv. 4. Thou hast judged down Babylon, which was exalted; thou hast pitied Sion, which lay in the dust for many ages and generations, and hast raised up thine holy building again, and wilt give to thy children to be clothed, and to walk before thee in pure white linen (which is the righteous nature and Spirit of thy Son) for evermore; and the darkness shall never come over them again, but the beast, dragon, and false prophet shall be cast into, and bound down in the lake; and the springs of life shall open, and whosoever will may come freely, and drink of the water of life. And the people in heaven shall say, *Hallelujah! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God.*

And the voice of great multitudes, and the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunders, shall say *Hallelujah!* and shall be glad, and rejoice, and shall give honour to the Lord, for the bride's marriage with the Lamb, and for her rich adorning for her bridegroom. Yea, the earth shall rejoice, and the multitudes of the isles be glad. Why so? Because the Lord reigns, who is tender even of the earth, and hates the oppressing not only of his seed, but also of his creatures: for he will reign and judge in righteousness, and tenderness, and much mercy, to all that is of him; and none shall feel his judgment and severity but that which is contrary to him, and joineth to his enemy. For the Lord will make war with that spirit, which is contrary to his life and nature, for ever and ever. And he that joineth to that spirit, shall find woe, misery, and tribulation (tribulation and anguish shall light upon every soul that continues in the evil-doing); but he that comes from under that spirit by the leadings of God's Spirit, bowing to and kissing the Son, shall taste of the Father's love to the Son, and partake of the mercy, peace, and reconciliation which is treasured up in him. *Amen.*

The

THE
WAY of SALVATION in the Covenant of LIFE
OPENED:

And some Stumbling-blocks removed out of the Way
of the Simple-hearted.

THERE are many whom the Lord hath raised up, in this day of the manifestation of his power, and of his everlasting love, to bear witness to his truth; among whom I also (who was an outcast, and miserable beyond expression) have obtained mercy to partake of the virtue, life, and power of his precious truth (which redeems from the bondage of sin and iniquity); and am also many times moved by the Lord to testify of that which he hath made known unto me, and given me to experience.

This brief touch sprang in me by way of preface. Now to the thing itself.

The Father, in whom is the whole virtue and power of redemption, sent his Son to gather the scattered and lost sheep of the house of Israel; and not only so, but he gave him also for a light to the Gentiles, that he might be his salvation to the ends of the earth; and sending him, he sent his Spirit and power with him: for that which is begotten by the Father is not able to do the work, unless anointed and assisted by the Father: therefore the Father, who sent him to preach the gospel, anointed him, and filled him with his Spirit, that he might preach the gospel according to that scripture, *Isai lxi. 1, 2, 3. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of our Lord, and to comfort all that mourn, &c.*

Quest. But how came these meek, these broken-hearted, these captives, these bound in prison, these mourners, to meet with the redemption and blessings which he is anointed to preach to them? Or which way do they come to receive and partake of them from him?

Ans. In faith. This all his outward healings did signify, being thus dispensed. (If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God. Thy faith hath made thee whole. O woman! great is thy faith! be it unto thee according to thy faith). And thus all his inward healings are bestowed upon, and received by, the soul; to wit, in the faith.

Quest. But how came they to have faith? Or how cometh any man to have faith in the redeeming power?

Ans. It is bestowed upon them by God, in the sense which is from him. His Word goeth forth from his mouth; there is a witness of him in
the

the heart, towards which it reacheth. Now it reaching to the witness, immediately it brings into a sense, and in that sense begets faith; and being mixed with this faith (which is of its own begetting) in them that hear it, begins the work of life and redemption in that heart where it is not yet begun, or carries it on in that heart wherein it is already begun. Thus faith hath a work, a work from the beginning of the heart's turning to God even to the end; which he that abides in the faith till the end, finds accomplished.

Object. But this faith is bestowed on some few whom God hath elected, not on all men.

Answ. God hath sent his gospel to be preached to every creature, and his Word is able to reach the witness, and work sense in every creature; and in whomsoever there is a sense wrought, they listening to God in that sense, he works faith in them; and waiting on the Word, hearkening to the Word, and staying their minds there-through on the Lord, he will speak peace to them, and keep them in peace, daily removing them more and more out of the reach and power of that which troubleth them.

Quest. Doth the new covenant lay all upon God, and require nothing of the creature? Or is there something required by God of the creature, in and by virtue of the new covenant?

Answ. Consider well; Doth not God require of the creature in the new covenant what he gives in the new covenant? Doth he not require the faith, and the exercising of that faith, which he himself works and gives in the sense, from the power and demonstration of his truth, to the soul? The new covenant requires more of the creature than ever the old did; but it requires them not of the creatures as weak in the fall, but as taught (strengthened and enabled) to walk with God in and by virtue of the covenant. Yea, all manner of holiness, and righteousness of heart, life, and conversation is required in and by the new covenant: for as the Lord works out of all therein in the creature, so the creature works out all thereby in the Lord, according to that known scripture, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* And as the creature is able to do nothing that is good of itself; so being grown up into the life and ability, which is of God, it is able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth it.

Quest. But why is it said that Christ was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, the meek, the broken-hearted, the captives, the bound in prison, the mourners (for want of righteousness, life, and peace)? Did not God give his Son in love to all? Was he not made a ransom and propitiation for all? Yea, was he not anointed to preach the gospel to all? How then comes it here to be thus limited and restrained to some?

Answ. It is true, God had a general respect to mankind, in the gift and anointing of his Son: but yet there are some in a better capacity to receive; already in the sense of the want of him, and panting and longing after him.

Yea,

Yea there are some, who are grievously sick in soul, and deeply wounded in spirit; the sadness and misery of whose condition cries aloud for the help of the physician. Now the eye and heart of the Lord is more especially towards these; and so he bids his prophets be instructing and comforting these, concerning the salvation, the healing, the oil of gladness, the Messiah to come; and when he comes, he sends him up and down to seek out these, to keep company with these, to help and relieve these; having given him the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to these weary distressed ones. These are not like the common, rough, unhewn, knotty, rugged earth; but like earth prepared for the seed, and so easily and naturally receive it. The gospel is preached to others at a distance; which, it is true, they may have, if they will hearken to it, and wait for it, and part with what must first be parted with; but they have a great way to travel thither. But these are near the kingdom; these are near that which opens, and lets in life; these are quickly reached to, melted, and brought into the sense, in which with joy they receive the faith; and with the faith the power; which brings righteousness and salvation to their souls. Tho' also the enemy is exceeding busy, to darken, disturb, and bow down these; that he might still keep them in the doubts, in the fears, in the chains, in the fetters, in the prison-house, from the liberty and healing which the word of the anointing brings.

Now mind. God is real towards all; he desires the life and salvation of all; not the destruction of any one soul that ever he created (it is unnatural to him). And the way that he holds forth, he stands ready to meet any man in. Whom is it that he doth draw? And who is it that may not come in the drawing? Is not his word an hammer? And whom can it not break? Is it not fire? And whose corruption can it not burn up? Is it not water, wine, and blood? And whom cannot it wash and nourish? Therefore, let no man think to lay the blame upon God, because of his perishing; for he will be deceived therein: and God will prove true, who saith, *Man's destruction is of himself*; and every man a liar, who layeth any blame on him, for not giving him further assistance with his power. Neither let him blame God for hardening him; for God hardeneth no man, but him who first refuseth and grieveth the power and love which would melt and soften him. It is true; we are the clay, and God the potter: and may not the potter make what vessels he will of his clay? This parable came from the Spirit of the Lord, to Israel of old: but what use did the Lord make of it? Did he say to them, Do what ye will, some of you I will cast off, and others of you I will shew mercy to; for I have determined so? Nay, not so: but I have this power over you; therefore do not provoke me. [Read Jer. xviii.] Was not God exceeding tender to that outward people, in that outward covenant? Did he ever give them up to pain and sufferings, without great provocations on their parts? *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Wherefore doth a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his*

sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. And the Spirit of the Lord never failed to do what was his part, towards the turning them from iniquity, towards the Lord, in that Covenant.

And when they did believe, consent, and obey, and did eat the good of the land, was it not pleasant and delightful to him? And when they provoked him to jealousy, and drew down judgments upon their heads, was it not irksome and painful to him [Read *Deut. v. 29. Isa. v. Ezek. xx. Jer. xlv. 4. and chap. xxxi. 20. Isa. lxiii. 7. to ver. 15.*] And will God fail to do his part towards any man for the salvation of his soul, which is so precious, of so great concern, and the loss whereof he knoweth to be so invaluable? No, no; the Spirit of God suffers, in every man upon the face of the earth, that sins against him; and is grieved and wounded by their unjust and unrighteous conversations, from day to day, against the testimony of somewhat of him in them, which is contrary thereto. Now this is of a precious nature; and being so despised and rejected by men, can it be wondered that God doth not proceed to make it more manifest, and to work more in men by it? Nay, may it not rather be wondered that God doth continue to manifest it so much? What man could endure to behold a thing so precious in his eyes (as this is in God's) so continually abused by, and to suffer so much from, that which is so far beneath it, as God daily doth? Therefore, if there come a day of reckoning for this, with all men upon the face of the earth (for who hath not had a talent from God; even of the pure eternal light in him, witnessing in his heart and conscience against the darkness?) there will be no cause of wondering at it. And is not this Light and Spirit (which shines in all mens darkness in some measure, stirring and witnessing against it, and endeavouring to persuade and draw the mind from it) the very same, in nature and kind, with the Light and Spirit of the Father, which appeared in that person of Christ? And, if hearkened unto and followed, would it not bring into union and fellowship with him, and into a partaking of the benefit of all he did in that body? Yea, would not the Spirit reveal whatever is necessary to be known, to that soul which receives and follows it? Oh! what hath God done (in his rich and tender mercy towards all) for mankind! And how clear will he be, when he opens and manifests the righteousness of his judgment! He will not clear himself after this manner; that he hath disposed of them to destruction, according to the power and prerogative of his will; but that they have run headlong into destruction, against the light and leadings of his will and power; to which it is natural to save, but not to destroy. That is the act which is proper to another nature and spirit, but strange to his.

Object. But could not God save any if he would? Who can resist his will or his power? Who can stop or resist him in the work of redemption, or destruction?

Ans. God can so put forth his will and power, as none can resist. Yea, the will and power of God (which offereth to save, and standeth ready to save) will bring destruction upon all that so dally with it, as to neglect and let pass the

the day of their visitation: and thus none can resist his will, or his power. But in the way wherein he appeareth, and hath chosen to work out Life and Salvation, Satan, and man's corrupt heart and mind, may and do often resist the will and power of the Lord. Now that which resisteth, is not of God, but against him; yet it is the patience of the Lord, to suffer it. I find drawings in my heart from God, or I durst not open these things. For I dare not hold out, to men what the Lord hath given me to know and experience, but only what he giveth and chuseth for me to hold out: and that will be life to them that receive it. But if I should hold out any thing of myself, that would not reach to life, but only feed the wrong part in men; and so help to build up that, which God will again throw down, before he saves that soul which is built up with the knowledge of things after this manner.

There is somewhat springs up in my heart, which may perhaps open this thing further to the minds of some.

Cain was the first wicked man that we read of; and how tender was God towards him! even him that sacrificed not after the Spirit, but after the flesh, and slew his Brother *Abel*? Now can any man lay *Cain's* wickedness either upon the Will, or upon the Decree and Counsel of God? Might he not have done well? Might he not have sacrificed to God in the Faith, as well as his brother *Abel*? And if he had done well, and offered in the faith, had he not found forgiveness and acceptance with the Lord? God accepteth no man's person; God rejecteth no man's person; but there is a seed he hath chosen; and to gather man into this seed, is his delight and work; as it is the delight, nature, and work of another spirit to scatter from this seed.

Now in this seed he doth accept, and not out of it. Yea, in this seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed, as they are gathered into, and abide in it. And this seed is a word nigh in the mouth and heart, both of *Jew* and *Gentile*; which, as it is hearkened to, writes the law of the Spirit of life in the heart, either of *Jew* or *Gentile*. And as they become sons, so the Spirit of the Father is poured out upon them; even the Spirit of adoption, which crieth *Abba, Father*, either in *Jew* or *Gentile*. And this is the gospel of the kingdom, which is preached more sparingly, or abundantly, by the mouth of the seed, as the Lord pleaseth.

For God's power, wisdom, mercy, love, goodness, patience, long-suffering, &c. is his own; and he may sow of it, or exercise it, more sparingly or abundantly, as he pleaseth. Yea, he doth exercise it more abundantly towards the vessels of mercy; so that the cause of their salvation doth not so much arise from their embracing of mercy, as from God's exercising of it. He visiteth nations as he pleaseth, and persons in nations as he pleaseth; and who may say unto him, *What dost thou? Why art thou so good and kind here? Or, Why art thou so sharp and severe there?* But still in the way, and according to the path, of the covenant, doth the Lord walk, in and towards all: and his mercy endureth for ever towards the seed of the righteous, and his justice and indignation for ever towards the seed of the evil-doer: and

man (simply considered) is not either of these; but as he is gathered into, and brought forth in, the root and spirit of either of these. Now every man hath a day for the life of his soul; and power and mercy is near him, to help him to travel from death to life. Happy is he, who is taught of God to make use of it.

And let not men puzzle themselves about the mystery of *Election* and *Reprobation*; which cannot be understood by such as are out of the thing wherein it is made manifest. Only thus, at present: *Pharaoh* and *Israel*, *Esau* and *Jacob*, *Ismael* and *Isaac*, &c. were parables, signifying somewhat inward. What was *Pharaoh*? Was he not the oppressor of God's *Israel*? What was *Esau*? Was he not the first birth, which sold the birth-right and inheritance? What was *Ismael*? Was he not the birth after the flesh? These are rejected, and cast off by God for ever; and the spiritual *Israel*, the spiritual *Jacob*, the spiritual *Isaac*, are accepted.

Shall I speak out this thing yet more plain? Why thus then: It is not the creature which is rejected by its Maker; but somewhat in the creature, and the creature in that. Nor is it the creature (simply) which is elected; but somewhat in the creature, and the creature in that. And as any man comes into that, the Election is begun in him: and as any man abides in that, he abides in the Election: and as that is made sure to any man, his Calling and Election is made sure to him. But as any man departs from that, he departs from the Election into the Reprobation: and going on in that into the full impenitency and hardness, he will for ever miss of the Election, and the Reprobation, and Sealing up to Condemnation, will be made sure to him. For God is no respecter of persons; but every-where, he that receiveth his holy seed, and therein worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. And he that receiveth the wicked seed, and therein worketh wickedness and unrighteousness, is with it rejected.

Object. But (may the honest heart say) *this may be truth, for aught I know; but indeed I did not apprehend things to be so: for I thought man and his works had been wholly excluded by the covenant of grace; but this seems to take both him and them in upon a consideration.*

Answer. Man is wholly excluded the covenant of grace, as in himself; as he stands in himself, and in his own ability, out of the newness of life and ability which is of the new covenant. But he is not excluded as he is renewed, and receiveth a new being, life, virtue, and ability, in the new covenant. But here much is required of him; and whatever he thus doth, is owned, acknowledged, and accepted by God. Here the true Jew hath praise of God. He is commended for his faith, and for his obedience in the faith: For his loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself: For his washing his garments in the blood of the Lamb, and keeping them clean in the same blood, while others defile theirs: For his merciful nature and actions to Christ in his members, while others are rough and cruel: For his watching against snares and temptations, while others

others are running into them: For his crucifying that in himself, which others feed in themselves: Yea, for his denying and turning from all ungodliness and worldly lusts, even of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life; all which are not of the Father (whom he is born of, and seeks after) but of the spirit of the world, which the earthly-minded man is born of, and seeks to please. So that (mark) though man is excluded in his corrupt nature and state, yet not the new man, not man in the regeneration. But man must be regenerated; and thus man must enter into the covenant of life; and thus man must abide and be found in the covenant of life, in the nature, in the righteousness, in the holiness, in the power thereof, if ever God own him.

Object. But this seems to lay difference on man's act, and not wholly on the grace of God. For the grace, in itself, is equally powerful towards all; but it is my receiving of it, which maketh it effectual unto me; which others not receiving, it is not so to them.

Ans. The grace, in itself, is of its own nature every-where. This is true. And that it hath power in it every-where, and that this power is over and above sin; this is true also. But yet there is a greater or lesser proportion of it given, according to the pleasure and good-will of the giver: and according to the measure of it (which is freely given) and the soul's growth therein, so is the power of it manifested in the heart.

Now the difference in every man is by the grace. Not of himself: for he can do nothing that is good, as of himself: but only by the grace; which is alone able to work that which is good in him, and to cause him to work in it. Yet thus it is: as the grace reacheth to him, draweth him, quickening and causing him, in the virtue, life, and obedience of the grace, to answer the grace; so doth the work thereof go on in him. And there is matter of condemnation to him, who doth not answer the grace; and there is matter of justification and praise to him, who doth answer the grace. Yet this whole ability arising not from himself, but from the grace; the acknowledgment of what is effected thereby, doth of right and due belong to the grace. And therefore they who are justified, sanctified, and crowned by the grace, do of right and due cast their crowns at the feet of the Lamb, at the throne of grace; giving honour and glory to him who is worthy, and to his grace which hath wrought all in them.

Now if any man would know this thing groundedly and certainly, let him not run into disputes of the mind and brain, but come to heart-experience. Hast thou ever found the work of God's grace in thy heart? Hast thou found thy heart, at any time, believe and obey, in and thro' the strength of the grace? Hast thou found thy heart at another time negligent of, or rebellious against, the grace? When thou wert rebellious, wert not thou condemned, and that justly too? When thou didst believe and obey, to whom did the honour thereof belong? to thee, or to the grace? Canst thou answer this? Why, as it is in thyself, between thee when obeying and disobeying;

obeying; the same is the state of the case between godly and wicked men. There was a difference between thee when thou obeyedst the grace, and when thou disobeyedst it: so is there between the unregenerate and regenerate. When thou obeyedst not, that which called for obedience condemned thee; so it doth them. When thou obeyedst, thou didst sensibly feel the praise was not thine, but belonged to the grace which wrought in thee; so is it also in the regenerate, in whom the Lord works by his grace, and who work out their salvation through him, and make their calling and election sure in him. Leave brain-knowledge, and come to true sense (where the mysteries of God are made manifest) and this will soon be easy and clear to thee. But these things were never intended by God to be found out by man's disputing wisdom: for God (who giveth the knowledge) hideth them from that part, and giveth them to the innocent simple birth of his own Spirit.

Object. But when the Father draweth, can any man resist or hold off? Doth not the power of the Lord make any man willing, whom he exerciseth his power towards? And is it not thereupon said, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power?"

Answ. The power of the Lord is great, and hath dominion over all evil spirits that can tempt, and over all the corruptions, backslidings, and withdrawals of the heart. But the Father doth not save man by such an absolute act of his power (for then there would need no more to be done, but an immediate translating of a man from death to life; which if the Lord please to do, nothing could come between to hinder); but the power of the Lord works in and according to the way that he hath appointed. And in this way the Devil hath liberty and power to tempt from, oppose and resist the work of God: and they that hearken to him, and enter into the temptation and snare which he lays, let his power in upon them, and withdraw from the virtue, operation, and strength of the power of God. Yet for all this, the Lord not only begins his work, but also carries it on in the day of his power; giving not only to will, but also to do what is right and pleasing in his eyes: but still in and according to his own way and covenant.

Object. And so whereas some men say, If God put forth his power to save, and the Devil interrupt and stop his work; then it seems that the Devil is stronger than God. Is the Devil stronger than God, say they? If he be not, how can he resist and withstand him in the work of his power?

Answ. Nay; the Devil is not stronger than God; though he is very strong. But if the heart let in the enemy, grieve the Spirit, beat back his power in the way wherein it hath appointed to work, the Devil may be more prevalent with him than the power of God. But in those that believe, and become obedient and subject to the power of God, his power is far stronger in them to defend and carry on his work, than the power of the Devil is to work against and hinder it.

There

There are objections also relating to Free-will, and Falling from Grace, which stick much in the spirits of many, and they cannot get over them; but it hath pleased the Lord to clear up these things to us, and to satisfy our hearts concerning them, so that with us there is no difficulty nor doubt about them.

As touching Free-will: We know, from God, that man in his fallen estate is spiritually dead, and hath no free-will to good; but his understanding and will are both darkened and captivated by the enemy. But in Christ there is freedom, and in his word there is power and life: and that reaching to the heart, looseneth the bands of the enemy, and begetteth not only a freedom of mind towards good, but an inclination, desires, and breathings after it. Thus the Father draws; and thus the soul (feeling the drawing) answers in some measure: and the soul, thus coming, is welcomed by Christ, and accepted of the Father. But for all this, the enemy will tempt this soul; and the soul may hearken to, let in, and enter into the temptation, and so draw back from the plough to which it put its hand. *Now if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, saith the Lord. And he that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.*

So concerning Falling away; The Lord shews us what it is that is apt to fall, and what cannot fall. Christ cannot fall; and that which is gathered into him, stands and abides in him (and so partakes of his preservation) cannot fall. There is no breaking in upon that power, which preserves in the way that it hath appointed: but there is a running and perishing out of the way. Out of the limits of the covenant, the preservation and power of the covenant is not witnessed. But in coming to Christ in the drawings of the Father, in the sense and faith which he begets, and abiding with him that drew, in the sense and faith which he daily and freshly begets anew (for he reneweth covenant and mercy daily, and keepeth covenant and mercy for ever) in this is the power felt, the preservation felt; in this the Father's hand encompasseth the soul, which none can pluck it out of. Now he that feels and experiences these things every day, that sees and feels daily how he can fall, and how he cannot fall; how he meets with the preservation, and how he misses of the preservation; how he abides in the pure power (which is the limits of this holy covenant) and how he wanders out of this power, into the limits of another covenant, spirit, and power; he knows these things, how they are indeed; whereas other men (who are not exercised in the thing) do but guess at them; striving to comprehend them in that part which God hath shut out of them.

Now mind a Parable, with which I shall conclude this:

Tho' the natural and outwardly-visible Sun be risen ever so high upon the earth, yet he that is naturally blind cannot see it, nor partake of the light thereof,

thereof. So also, though the spiritual Sun, the Sun of righteousness, the Sun of the inward world, be risen ever so high, and appear brightly in ever so many clouds; yet they that are spiritually blind cannot discern it, nor reap the benefits of its light, nor partake of the healing which is under his wings.

Some Q U E R I E S
CONCERNING THE
NEW COVENANT.

Query 1. **W**HAT is the covenant of hell and death, which must of necessity be broken, before a soul can be gathered into the covenant of life?

Query 2. What is the covenant of life and peace, into which God gathers the soul?

Query 3. How doth God gather? By a meer act of power, which none can resist? or in a way wherein his power (though much resisted) shall prevail for the salvation of those, who are faithful in the covenant; who come to Christ, abide in Christ, resist and fight (in Christ) against all that is contrary to his nature and Spirit, and overcome through him?

Query 4. Are there any terms in this covenant? Or can there be any terms in this covenant, suitable to the nature of the covenant? Is believing in the power, as absolutely required in this covenant, as obedience to the law was under the covenant of the law?

Query 5. If faith in the power, and obedience to the power that redeems, be required as terms in the new covenant; yet if they be not required of the creature in its own capacity and ability, but as strengthened and enabled by the virtue, life and power of the covenant, are they not free terms, noble terms, worthy and becoming a free covenant?

Query 6. Is not this the gospel, or new covenant, That whosoever believeth, and receiveth the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire (suffering in the flesh, and having his sins and corruptions purged away by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, and so walketh no longer after the flesh, but after the spirit) I say, is not this the gospel, or new covenant, that he that thus believeth, and is thus baptized, shall not be condemned with the world, but justified and saved by that Spirit and power which cleanseth him?

Query

Query 7. Doth God write his laws in mens hearts, or put his fear therein, or his Spirit within them, causing them to walk in his ways and statutes, and to keep his judgments, &c. I say, doth God do this to men out of the faith? Is not the work of salvation begun in the faith, and carried on and perfected in the faith? And he that maketh shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience, can he groundedly hope to have the work of salvation carried on in him?

Query 8. Doth not God beget, increase, and perfect the faith, which is available unto salvation? Is any man accepted in the faith which is of his own nature? Or is the acceptation in and through the faith which is of the Son's nature?

Query 9. May the temptations of the Devil, with a man's hearkening thereto, hinder God's begetting faith in him or no? Or if it be begotten, can they hinder the growth and increase of it?

Query 10. When God draws, must a man necessarily come to the Son? Or may the Devil so tempt, and he so hearken thereto, as that his coming to the Son may be hindered, notwithstanding the Father's drawing?

Query 11. Is there not justification to them that receive the seed, to them that obey the light? And is there not condemnation to them that refuse the seed, and obey not the gospel of its salvation?

Query 12. Do men perish for want of power from God? Or through their cleaving to another power, and refusing the strength of that which is over that other power; whose hand would help their souls, and bring them through and over it, did they receive it, and cleave to it in the way the Lord hath appointed?

Query 13. They that receive the power, believe in it and live; do they do it by their own strength? Or in the strength and virtue which flows from the power, which enlivens, draws, and makes able to follow?

Query 14. Those that are weak as to the power, and in whom the enemy and corruptions are strong; is the defect on God's part? or on his covenant's part? Or in the way of life, which he hath pitched upon as sufficient to redeem and deliver fallen man by? Or is God (and his covenant and way of life) wholly clear of the defect, and rests it wholly on them?

A N

EXHORTATION to ALL PEOPLE,

But more especially to SUCH as are

DESOLATE and DISTRESSED.

NOW is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. Now is the life arisen, and now the light shines, to guide out of the darkness and death, into the land of the living. Oh! awake, ye that sleep in the dust of the earth; arise up from among the dead, and Christ shall give you light, to walk along in the path of the living! Come to him whom the Father hath sealed; who is life, and who giveth life freely to all that come; yea, abundantly, to those that wait upon him, and walk faithfully in his covenant. Oh! therefore come into covenant with him; mind the words of his lips, which beget sense, and in that sense his life stirs, and in the stirrings of his life the drawings of the Father are felt. And when the Father draws, he whom-ever he draws may come; and him who comes, Christ will in no-wise cast out, but receive into his arms, and defend by his power, against that which would draw or force back from him into perdition. Therefore hearken to the little movings and stirrings in you, after that which is eternal; for any desire which is in truth after him, he will not quench (it is his nature to cherish it); but he will be a strength and relief to the soul, against that which would quench and put out the breathings and pantings after him, that it might still hold the soul in bondage and captivity. And, people, mind this (it is a true testimony). The door of life is now so opened, by him who hath the key and power, that whoever will may enter. For the power of life is arisen, against the power of death and the destroyer of the soul: so that great, yea very great advantage is there in this day, to all that are willing to follow the leader and captain of salvation, out of the land of captivity. Mind but his visits, and be faithful in the strength which flows from him; and nothing shall hinder thy soul from overcoming what stands in thy way, to stop thee from attaining the eternal crown and inheritance of life.

And as for you afflicted mourners, who are seeking the way to Sion, bewailing the absence of your beloved, in whose presence is life and redemption, resurrection from the dead, and victory over sin; yea all that your hearts have desired or can desire: what shall I say to you? O my friends,
and

and dear brethren! May I speak a little freely to you concerning the Lord Jesus? How that he was born of the Virgin Mary, according to the flesh, fulfilled his ministry and service in the flesh, and was taken up to God; and how that the same Lord Jesus was afterwards born in Spirit, of the spiritual woman the church; even so born as to rule all nations with an iron rod; and yet did not come forth to rule the nations, but was taken up to God again, and hath not since appeared in that Spirit, power, and dominion; but only in such a strength of life, as might enable his witnesses to bear witness to him all along the apostasy, until the church should come out of the wilderness, and the man-child appear again.

And now hear the joyful news. The apostasy is ended. Mark; I do not say the apostasy is generally ended. No, no; there are many woes, plagues, judgments, and terrible thunders to come upon persons, and nations, before they feel it ended. But it is ended in some vessels, which are upon the earth. The man of sin, that wicked one, the son of perdition hath been discovered by the Spirit of the Lord; chased, consumed, and destroyed by the breath of his mouth, and by the brightness of his appearance in some. Yea, the church is come out of the wilderness, and the man-child is come along with her; for she is not come without her beloved, but leaning upon her beloved; and he is known ruling with his golden scepter, and with his iron rod battering down the corrupt, selfish, stubborn, earthly spirit, and raising up that which is meek, tender, lowly, and lay bowed down and oppressed.

Now as Christ said, preaching in the days of his flesh, *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears*, Luke iv. 21. Was it not then fulfilled outwardly among the outward Jews? Were there any sick, or weak, or blind, or lame, or lepers, or possessed with devils, whom he was not ready to cure? And did he not go about doing good, and seeking them out to cure them? So may it not now be said in the Spirit and power of the Lord, among the spiritual Jews; this day is this scripture fulfilled spiritually in your ears. Yea, what he did then outwardly, is known in spirit to be done among you inwardly and spiritually. How many that were before blind do now see? That were before deaf do now hear? That were formerly lame do now walk? That were very leprous are now cleansed? That were very dead are now raised? That were quite dumb do now speak? And the poor, the empty, the naked are now clothed, and filled with the riches and treasures of the everlasting kingdom? May it not be truly said, by many poor distressed hearts, that the wilderness and solitary place is now glad, because that which once was parched with drought and barrenness, now feels the living springs, and the breaking forth of the pure clear river of life, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, and cause melody in the heart to the Lord? Where is the envious, cruel, dragonish nature, may some say? Yea, where is the place where dragons lay? Is there not a new creation? a new heaven, a new earth; and are not all things become new

therein? Are not the old things of the night, and of the darkness, passed away, and all things become new in this day, which the Lord hath made, in the hearts which have received and been subject to his light?

And now what hinders, but that ye also should lift up your heads, and see the coming of the Son of man in the clouds wherein he comes, and partake of the redemption, virtue, and power of his appearance? What are the clouds wherein he comes? Is his coming outward? Or are the clouds outward? Or is his coming inward and spiritual in ten thousands of his saints? Did not Enoch see that he was to come so to judge the world? Doth he not come to be glorified in his saints? Are not they to judge the world? They in him, he in them? Oh! read aright; read with the Spirit, and with the understanding which is thereof; and then the truth of the letter will be manifest and shine to you. There is nothing stands in your way, but want of a spiritual eye to see his spiritual appearance in others (and so to wait for it in yourselves), even the eye of faith, which sees the invisible power and glory, as the Lord openeth it and maketh manifest to it.

Now this I have to say to you, in true sense and understanding. Come down to the Gentile's light, come down to that which God hath dispensed to the Gentile, as well as to the Jew; which is *the word* (or commandment) *nigh in the mouth and heart*. This hath been the lowest of all, despised by all; and this is in the heart of God to exalt over all; for it is above all. The lowest in its descent from the Father; the highest in its ascent to the Father. This is the thing which man ran from, when the veil came over him; which all the shadows of the law were to point out and signify. And as man is brought again to this, life springs in him, and the powerful redemption of the eternal word is witnessed by him. Yea, he that hears the voice of this, though he were ever so dead in trespasses and sins, shall feel life spring in him, and the covenant of life inwardly revealed, which by the pure faith and obedience is the entrance into, and the abiding in. And this is the one truth, the one pure eternal word and way to the Father, which was from the beginning, and remains the same unto the end. This is the door, at which all hitherto have entered into life, at which all do still enter, and there is no other. Blessed for ever is he, who hath made it so manifest and plain in this our day; and blessed are they that see it, and enter into life at it!

A

VISIT of Tender and Upright LOVE

TO SUCH A-S,

Among the many Professions and Ways of Religion,
retain any Measure of Sincerity of Heart, and true
Desires after the LORD.

THE main thing in religion is to receive a principle of life from God, whereby the mind may be changed, and the heart made able to understand the mysteries of his kingdom, and to see and walk in the way of life; and this is the travail of the souls of the righteous, that they may abide, grow up, and walk with the Lord in this principle; and that others also, who breathe after him, may be gathered into, and feel the virtue of, the same principle.

But there is one that stands in the way to hinder this work of the Lord, who with great subtilty strives to keep souls in captivity, and to prejudice them against the precious living appearances of the redeeming power of the Lord.

One great way whereby he doth this is, by raising up in them a fear lest they should be deceived and betrayed, and instead of obtaining more, lose that little of God which they have. With this was I exercised long; and still, when life stirred in my heart, then this fear was raised in me; so that I durst not in judgment close with what secretly in spirit I felt to be of God, it having a true touch of his quickening, warming, convincing, enlivening virtue in it.

Now that this snare may be escaped by such as breathe after the Lord, oh! let them wait, mourn, and cry to him, that he would write his pure fear in their hearts, and teach them when to fear, and how to fear, and what to fear; and in that (or as that is brought forth in them) they shall see that they have more cause to fear their present state, than to fear that which, in the quickening warmth and virtue of God, comes to make a change in their present state; yea, they shall then see how the enemy now causeth them to fear, where no fear is; and keepeth them from fearing, where the fear is. For what is the ground of fear now? This is the great thing that they should fear, lest they should not hear the call of the Spirit of the Lord out of Babylon; out of that part of Babylon out of which they have

not

not yet travelled; and lest they should not hear and mind the call of his Spirit unto Sion, the holy mount of God, towards and unto which he leadeth his people, in this day of the revelation and manifestation of his glorious love and power.

Oh! therefore, my friends, ye that long after the Lord, ye that desire to feel the power of his truth, wait for the principle of life from him to be revealed in you, and the pure fear which is therefrom, that ye may feel the Lord thereby, and therein (even in and through that principle) writing his fear, his pure fear, his holy fear, his powerfully-preserving fear, in your hearts; that ye may know the way to him, the seed (which is the way) may come and join to him therein, and never depart from him. The fear of the Lord, from the principle of his life, will (without fail) effect this in you as ye receive it from the Lord; but the other fear, the fear which the enemy begets, will not do it; but will be a bar and sore stop in your way, till the Lord, by his holy power, through his tender mercy, remove it from you.

And now answer me one question uprightly, as in God's sight, from whom it is in my heart to propound it to you.

Are you come to Sion, or are ye travelling thitherward rightly and truly? Have ye ever known any of the travellers, that ye have been acquainted with, that could in truth say, that they were come to Sion? The Christians, in the primitive times, were come to Sion, and they were acquainted and dwelt with God and Christ there; and knew Jerusalem, the heavenly building, the city of the living God. Oh! where are ye? Nay, are ye yet come out of Babylon? Do ye yet know the wilderness, the intricate passages therein, wherethrough God alone can lead the soul? Oh! depart ye, depart ye from your present stations (in the leadings of God's Spirit), unless ye can say, in the true unerring light, that they are your rest, your souls true rest, even the everlasting kingdom, which the primitive Christians received (and into which they found entrance), which could not be shaken.

And, friends, let me tell you one thing further (for my heart is at this present opened to you by the Lord), that as the soul (in its travels) comes to Sion, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is witnessed, which makes free from the law of sin and death. And then there is no more such a crying out of the body of sin as there was before; but a blessing of him who hath delivered, and daily doth deliver, from it: yea, the body of sin is known and felt to be put off, and Christ put on in the stead thereof. For, my friends, there are several states witnessed by the soul, in its true and sensible travels towards the Holy Land. As for instance:

1. There is a state of Egyptian darkness and bondage, in which the power of death reigns and rules in the heart, subjecting it to sin and death. And here the soul is in the grave, and under death, captivity, and bondage, in the midst of all its professions of religion, and talk of God and Christ, and reading scriptures, and observing ordinances and duties, &c.

2. There

2. There is a wilderness-state, wherein the strength of captivity is somewhat broken, and the heart drawn to mind the leadings of life, and to follow after the Lord through the trials, through the preparations, through the several exercises which the Lord seeth good to exercise it with.

And here the mercy and goodness of the Lord is experienced, and the deceitfulness and treachery of the heart. This is the place of humiliation and breaking, wherein the soul daily feels how untoward and unaccustomed it is to the yoke, which should break the spirit, and subdue it to God. Here the Lord shews the soul what its heart is, that he might humble it, and do it good in the latter end. Here the very law of God appears weak, through the strength of the flesh, which is not yet subdued. Now here is mourning, and groaning, and crying to the Lord night and day, both because of the violence and multitude of the enemies, and because of the naughtiness, distrust, and unbelief of the heart.

3. There is a state of rest, a state of peace, a state of life, a state of power, a state of grace, a state of dominion, in the life, and through the power of the Lord, wherein the law of life is manifested in dominion in the heart over the law of sin and death. There is an everlasting kingdom, wherein God and Christ reign, in which God treads Satan down under the feet of the soul, and makes the soul a king and a priest in the Son of his love; and the soul feels it is one with, and accepted in, the beloved.

Now, friends, that ye may know this kingdom, travel faithfully towards it; feel and come into the reign of Christ in it; sit down in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and inherit substance; know the gathering to Christ in the name, and sit down in the name, where the enemy cannot touch you; but feel the preservation and powerful life and dominion of that seed which is over the enemy, and wherein and whereby the Lord scatters the enemy, bruising the serpent's head, and anointing the soul with the oil of gladness, and cloathing it with the beautiful garments of his righteousness and salvation; and that ye may know the precious and glorious building of life in the Spirit, even of the holy house and city of God, where the walls are salvation, and the gates praise. For this end it is in my heart from the Lord to write these things unto you; and the Lord God of his mercy open the door of entrance to you into these things; for there is but one door of life, and there is not another; which door is Christ the seed; which seed is revealed within, there to break the wisdom, strength, and head of the serpent; and so far as he breaks it there, redemption and freedom is witnessed from it, and no further.

Oh! that ye might receive an understanding from the Lord; and be taught by him to deny and part with the understanding which is not of him, that ye might see things (from him, and in his light) which ye have not yet seen; and consider aright of that, which the enemy hitherto, by his subtilty, hath prejudiced you against.

And

And now as for us, who experience the truth as it is in Jesus, and with the Lord our God in his Light, and by virtue of his life and love shed abroad in our hearts: I say, what is it to us to be judged by you in your day as persons that deny Christ, deny scriptures, deny ordinances, deny duties, &c. ? We are satisfied in our hearts as touching your judgment, knowing from the Lord what it is in you that thus judgeth of us, even the same thing that judged amiss of Christ (in the Scribes, Pharisees, and professing Jews) in the days of his flesh. And indeed that in you can never judge aright; but is to be judged, condemned, and destroyed by the life and power of the Lord.

And oh! that ye knew (sensibly knew) what is to live, and what is to die in you, that ye might feel the rising of your souls out of the grave, through the immortal seed of God, and the bringing of all your wisdom and knowledge of the things of God (which ye hold, and make use of out of the compass and limits of his holy life and covenant) into death.

For, friends, let me tell you, that which hath been parted with (for the kingdom's sake, and the righteousness thereof) in some, was more precious than what ye hold so stiffly, and so magnify in your own thoughts and reasonings against the truth. Yea, that which was once of high esteem, and very glorious in our eyes, is now become as dross and dung, for the excellency of the pure living knowledge of, and fellowship with, Jesus Christ, our Lord; and if ye had the true measure and balance to weigh things in, ye would acknowledge it: but the letter, and literal ordinances and duties, and apprehensions of things out of the life, kills you, and keeps you under the veil, and from the sight of the things which are within the veil.

Oh! that God would rend the veil in you! Oh! that God would give you the feeling of, and union with, that whereby he rends the veil! Oh! that he would humble you, and bring down the mighty from his seat of judgment in you, to be judged and abased, and exalt the meek and lowly into that which is his proper place!

Oh! that ye might feel the work of God, even the redemption of the soul, begun and carried on by him with power in your hearts! Then would ye know Christ indeed, the scriptures indeed, the ordinances indeed, the duties indeed, the everlasting sabbath, the everlasting worship; even the substance of all that was shadowed out under the law, and sit down under the wing of the Almighty, from whence the power, the life, the virtue, the healing, drops into the soul.

And now, to give a little touch at those things beforementioned, which ye so stumble at, a little to help to remove them from your spirits, if it please the Lord.

1. We do not deny that Christ which died at Jerusalem; but own him, and no other: and own what he did, his obedience to the Father always, and in all things; his sufferings in the virtue and power of the Father, and the value of them with the Father. This the Lord our God teacheth

us to own, and to bless the name of the Lord, for him who is the captain, and worker out of our salvation; a measure of whose life and power we have received, and embrace in our hearts; and in this is He, the fulness, made manifest to us; and we, through this, and by this, and in this, ingrafted into him; and so come to partake of the sweetness and fatness of the olive-tree. Yea, this we certainly know, that Christ was not only made manifest in that body of flesh, but is also made manifest in our mortal flesh, as we are gathered into his life, and his life brought forth in us. And he is not only antichrist, that denieth Christ's appearance in that body of flesh; but he that denieth him (the hope of glory) in his saints, his spiritual body. Yea, I beseech you consider, whether it hath been the work of antichrist all along the apostasy to deny the appearance of Christ in that body of flesh, or to deny the appearance of his life and Spirit in the flesh of his saints? *We know (saith the apostle John) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true.* How was he come? Was not he that was with them come in them? Did he not live in them, act in them, speak in them? And did not they that were of God hear the voice of Christ, the voice of the shepherd in them? But they which were not of God, which were not the sheep, could not hear the voice of Christ in his apostles and believers; could not own him come in their flesh, though they could preach the same Christ in words, and own his coming in that body of flesh which he had appeared in, *1 John iv. 6.*

2. We do indeed really, heartily, singly, as in God's sight, own the scriptures; the scriptures written by the prophets and holy men of God under the law; the scriptures written by the evangelists and apostles in the time of the gospel; and we read them with delight and joy, and would draw no man from a right reading of them to the benefit of his soul; but only from giving their own judgments on them without the Spirit of God; lest, in so doing, they wrest them to their own destruction.

This is that which the Lord hath drawn us from, and which we know it would also be profitable to others to be drawn from too; to wit, from imagining and guessing at the meaning of scriptures, and interpreting them without the opening of that Spirit from which they were given forth; for they who so do, feed that part (with a gathered knowledge) which should be famished, die, and perish, that another thing might come to live in them, and they in it.

Now to us, being taught of God, and led by him into the things and through the conditions the scriptures speak of, the scriptures are very precious, the relation of things under the law precious, the instructions, promises, and comforts precious, yea, the very reproofs and denunciations of judgment to that part, nature and spirit which the judgments are to, precious; and it is impossible for any heart to conceive (who hath not the experience of the thing) how life springs in us; and how sweet, pleasant, and profitable the words of life in the writings of the holy men of

God are to our spirits; and in reading them we often meet with refreshment, comfort, hope, and joy, from the working of the same Spirit in us, which gave forth the good words through them.

3. As touching ordinances, we own all the ordinances and appointments of God to the Jews under the law, and God's presence with them, walking with the Lord, and worshipping him in the faith according thereto. Yea, what if I should say, that we know and are exercised in the same worship in Spirit towards the Lord our God, who hath called and taught us to worship him in spirit and truth, so as he taught them, according to the shadow and letter? What if I should say that we worship the Lord in spirit on the Lord's-day (which is inward and spiritual, the true rest, the substantial sabbath), and that we offer up to him the living sacrifices, which the high-priest of our profession prepares in us for the most excellent majesty and glory of our God therein? Were not the sacrifices under the law, which they offered up according to the letter, types and shadows of what the Lord teacheth us, and giveth us to offer up to him in spirit, when we appear before him in his house built on his holy mountain? For, friends, the house wherein we appear is spiritual (an house of God's own building); the worship spiritual, the sacrifices spiritual, the day of worship spiritual, even the day which the Lord hath made. And here we know and enjoy the things shadowed out under the law spiritually, eating that which is meat indeed, and drinking that which is drink indeed, even the flesh and blood of the Son of man; in which we feel and partake of his nature, his virtue, his life, his substance, and both take it in into us, and put it upon us; so that we have Christ both to be our food and cloathing; and in the birth, nature and Spirit which is of him, cannot be deceived concerning him.

But the great matter ye seem to have against us as to ordinances, is about the baptism of water, and breaking outward bread, and drinking outward wine; concerning which I have two or three weighty queries to propound to be seriously considered of.

Query 1. Were these things themselves the things of the kingdom, or significations of somewhat relating to the kingdom, as the shadows under the law were? And so, though they might have a use and service in the passage from the law, yet could they have an absolute place in the day? For as the day dawns and breaks, the shadows fly away. What should the shadow do, when that which the shadow signified is come? What place is there for shadows in the substance, in the everlasting kingdom?

Now though the apostle condescended so as to circumcise for the sake of the Jews, yet circumcision was not to abide. So he condescended also as to John's baptism; to wit, the baptism of water (for that was not Christ's baptism, but his baptism was that of the Holy Ghost and fire); yet he blessed God he did not make use of it, and said, *he was not sent to baptize.* What was he not sent to baptize with? Why not with water, not with John's baptism; but he was sent to baptize with Christ's baptism; to baptize

nize into the name, into the Spirit, into the power (and so were all the apostles), as well as to preach the gospel, *Gal. iii. 5. Matt. xxviii. 19.*

Then for the outward supper: was not that a shadow of the true substantial supper of the Lord, of the breaking of the true bread, and drinking of the true wine (the fruit of the vine of life) in the kingdom of God? Which kingdom was at hand in John's time, and the disciples of Christ were to pray it might come; and the apostles, and they afterwards (that were in the power, in the life, in the righteousness, in the joy eternal) did witness it come. For mark: the promise was not only of a kingdom of glory hereafter, when the body is laid down; but they were to receive the kingdom, and feel an entrance (yea, an abundant entrance) into the everlasting kingdom ministered to them even then: and they were to eat bread in the kingdom, and drink wine in the kingdom, even new bread, and new wine, fresh from the table of the Lord, yea, and with the Lord, in his presence, according to the promise, *he would come and dwell in them, and walk in them, and sup with them, and they with him.* And thus they in their day, and we in our day (blessed be the name of the Lord our God) eat and drink of the heavenly bread and wine of the kingdom with Christ therein; every one sitting in the heavenly place, and mansion of rest, which the Lord hath built up and prepared for him.

Query 2. Have not these outward things been much abused, and the antichristian spirit (even the whorish spirit, which hath adulterated from the life and power of God) appeared in them, and cried them up? And surely, as so cried up by that spirit, they are neither of nor for Christ.

And consider well what that outward court was which God gave to the Gentiles, and what the worship and ordinances of the outward court were; and whether they were not given to the Gentiles also, and whether these are any part of them; for if so, then they belong not to, nor are required by, the Lord, of the inward Jews, who are of the circumcision in the heart, and are come to inherit the substance.

Query 3. Whether there be any virtue in these things in themselves, without God's requiring of them? Can outward water wash the soul? Can outward bread and wine feed or refresh it? Indeed if God require a man to wash his body with water, he ought to be subject, and there will be profit to him in his subjection; but of itself it is but a bodily exercise, and without God's requiring it, it would be but will-worship, and profit him nothing at all.

Now truly the Lord did never require this of us; but hath shewn us the water which our souls and bodies had need of to be washed with, and the bread and wine which they are to be fed and refreshed with: and in following the Lord according as he hath led us, and required of us, we have found reconciliation, life, rest, peace, and joy with our Father, and pure refreshment from him.

Query 4. As touching duties: These are the two great duties we are taught, *To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and spirit; and our neighbour as ourselves.* And these we learn by believing in him whom God hath sent, and receiving the seed of life from him; in the growth whereof in us we live, and are made one with him, and partakers of the ability which is of him. For not by working of ourselves do we attain to this; but by the working of his powerful life in us, through his mercy to us. He circumciseth us, he cuts off the enmity, he brings under the old nature and spirit in us, and then the new springs up, and we are renewed in it. And in this we learn and are made able to love the Lord, and his children, and his creatures, yea, all that is of him. And this love constrains us to obey the Lord, and deny all for him; so that we can suffer any thing (through his strength) but sin, but corruption, but unbelief, but disobedience to him. Yea, this makes us so tender towards him, that we can rather part with all of this world, than the integrity and subjection of our spirits to him in the least thing that he requires of us; his truth (and our testimony thereto) in every respect being far dearer to us than our lives, and all the enjoyments and pleasures of this present world.

From these two great duties flow many others as towards God; to fear him with the fear which is not taught by the precepts of men, but which he writes in our hearts; to wait upon him night and day in his temple, even in the holy place of his building; to call upon him in the motion, guidance, will, and help of his Spirit (for indeed when once we learn of God, we are taught to pray no more after the flesh, no more after the will, wisdom, or way of man); as also to be sensible of his goodness, and give thanks to him in every condition.

And in this we feel his presence and acceptance, as the Lord is not forgotten by us; but when we eat and drink, walk abroad, or stay at home, we feel him near, and our hearts acknowledge him, bow to him, wait upon him, bless him, praise his name, and speak words concerning him, or to him, with the outward voice, when he gives them, and requires them of us; but of a truth we dare bring no sacrifices of our own, nor kindle any fire or sparks of our own; but wait for the holy breath, Spirit, and power of our God, to perform all in us, and by us.

But now, because we do not pray at certain set-times (as we formerly were wont to do) nor speak words before and after meat as formerly, and the like, ye are offended with us, and say we deny this duty. No, no; we do not deny to God the prayer which is from the birth immortal; but this we say, and sensibly feel, prayer is a gift, and the ability thereof is in God's Spirit; for we know not what to pray for as we ought, nor have we a power in us to pray when or as we will; but in the Holy Spirit, in his breathing in us, is our ability; and we are to wait on him for the moving and breathing of his Spirit, and not to pray of ourselves, or in our own wills or times, but in the Father's. And it is a mighty thing to speak to
God

God aright in prayer. Flesh must be silent before him, and laid still and low in his presence, that the pure spring may open, the pure breath breathe, and the pure voice issue forth; for God heareth not sinners, but the born of him that doth his will. This must every soul witness in his measure, as Christ witnessed it in the fulness; and there is no serving God aright, or performing any duty or ordinance of worship to him aright, but in a measure of the same life and Spirit wherewith Christ served him.

Now I do not only own the state of the Jews in their integrity, and of the primitive Christians in theirs, and of what the Lord hath caused to break forth in this our day, but I also own all the appearances of God all along the night of the apostasy in the holy martyrs and witnesses, which he raised up, and enabled to bear testimony to his truth, and against the anti-christian practices of many in that dark night of the apostasy. And thus also I own all the work of God in my own heart, and in the hearts of others (whom he pleased to work upon) in former times; yea, the breathings and desires which are yet in the hearts of any after the Lord, so far as they are in the truth, and of and from the Lord, I cannot but own. But the Lord hath shewn me that there is a great mixture in mens desires and endeavours after him; and that the evil spirit (by his subtilty) doth often get the managing of them, and turn the very zeal and earnestness of the mind (through prejudices and misapprehensions) against the Lord and his truth. Now this is a very dangerous state, and there are some (who little think so) in this state, doing that against the Lord, and against his Christ, his truth, his people, which, if ever their eyes be opened, they will mourn bitterly over; and if their eyes be not opened, but they walk on by a wrong light (even by a light of their own gathering, imagining, and conceiving) whither will it lead them, and what will their end be? Oh! that ye could hear! Oh! that ye could fear aright! Oh! that ye could rightly consider! Oh! that ye could feel the life and power of the Lord near you, the Word of life near you, even as near as ye have felt the enemy and his temptations, that ye might partake of, and witness with joy, the virtue and redemption of it! Oh! that ye could once aright look upon him whom ye have pierced, and yet daily pierce, and cannot but pierce, until the righteous judgments of the Lord be poured out on the head of the transgressor in you, and the Lord waited upon, feared, and subjected to, in the way of his judgments, that ye may feel the refining-work finished, the dross burned up, the temple prepared, the vessel brought pure out of the furnace! What then? Why when the Lord hath built up Sion, prepared his temple, cleansed his house, will he not appear there in his glory? Shall it not become an house of prayer, of pure prayer, and of pure praises? Shall there be any lame or blind sacrifices offered up there? Shall it not be the beauty of holiness indeed? Shall not the appearance of the Lord be more glorious there than ever it was in the temple and ordinances under the law? Shall not every living stone in this building feel the
God

God of life and power present of a truth, and feel not only the earth, but the very heavens melt before him and pass away, and nothing remain but the pure light and life of the Lamb?

Words and promises spoken concerning things to be brought forth in the gospel-state do not go beyond the things spoken; but the things brought forth excel and go beyond the words, being so felt and enjoyed by that which is fitted and prepared by the Lord, as words cannot utter. The Lord God lead all that rightly desire after him into the right way (and preserve them therein) of meeting with and enjoying what their hearts rightly desire, and beat back the enemy in all his devices of entangling, perplexing, and drawing them aside; that they may receive the covenant, the new covenant, walk with God in the light thereof, live in the life thereof, obey through the power thereof; and may know what kind of meat and drink, what joy, delight, and pleasure it is to the soul to do the will, in the principle, and by the power, of the new life. So the Lord God Almighty, the creator, guider, and preserver of his Israel, lead you out of the darkness, bring you through the wilderness, reveal the hope in you, and stay your minds thereon, and give you to feel the true travel and faithful walking with him in the footsteps of the flock, which he hath led and is leading his in, and unto some of whom (in the tender mercy which from on high hath visited them) he hath given full rest and satisfaction in his truth.

A

B R I E F A C C O U N T

O F T H E

Ground of CERTAINTY and SATISFACTION, which it hath pleased the LORD to establish in my Heart, concerning Religion, and the Things of His Kingdom.

I HAVE been afflicted from my childhood, mourning and seeking after the Lord, and feeling very much grief and pain of spirit, through my sense of the want of him. I have not been contented with the way of religion I was educated in, but (through that of God which stirred in me) found

found great defects in it, and was drawn and led by his Spirit to travel thro' it, and seek further. That which I still sought after was the resting-place, the life of my soul, and power and presence of the Lord, that demonstration of his Spirit (as touching truth and the way of God) which was witnessed in the days of the apostles. Now, breathing after this, but not meeting with it, caused unutterable anguish, misery, and distress in my heart, so that my condition could not be hid within mine own breast, but my sorrow also brake forth in the sight of others.

But at length the eternal bowels have pitied me, and have shewed me the place of the soul's rest, and I have felt the eternal arm gathering me into, and giving me some possession of, a measure thereof; so that my heart is satisfied about religion and the things of God's kingdom, being taught of God how to know the Pearl, and the way also how to come to inherit and enjoy it; and in that way I have had great experience of the love, mercy, wisdom, goodness, power, and righteousness of the Lord; and notwithstanding all my soul's enemies, I still feel his presence, life, and power to his praise, which doth the work in me, and which giveth me to hope in him, and wait upon him. And now in love and tenderness of bowels to others, it is in my heart to answer a Question or two about the ground of the assurance and satisfaction which God hath given my soul; it being in my heart not to grieve or trouble any, but only to be helpful in holding forth what the Lord hath demonstrated to and written in my heart, as he shall draw, move, and enable my spirit thereunto; to whom my soul boweth, and giveth the praise all that he hath done in me, and pleaseth by his Spirit and power to work through me.

Quest. 1. It may be enquired by some, How I come to know the Spirit of God, and his church, and the scriptures of the holy men to be written by the inspiration and leading of his Holy Spirit; and how I know the motions and drawings of his Spirit in me, from the motions, suggestions, and temptations of the evil spirit; and how I am satisfied that I am in the way of truth and life eternal, and do not wander out of it, and err from it?

Ans. Thus I know; By receiving, joining to, abiding and growing up in that holy seed, which the Father of spirits hath sown in me. There is an elect seed which cannot possibly be deceived, which seed the Father soweth, and causeth to grow in the hearts of them that receive it; whose earth is by him digged and prepared for it. Now I have felt this seed from God, this holy pure thing, which there is nothing like for virtue and excellency. Nothing hath its nature besides it, nothing manifests the Father but it; the heart is changed, renewed, restored into the holy image by this alone.

In this seed there is no deceit; no deceit ever came from it, no deceit ever entered into it, nor can; and from the day that I have known it, I have always felt preservation by it, while my heart hath been kept to it. Mine eye never mis-saw in it, mine ear never mis-heard in it, my heart ne-

ver misunderstood in it; but here I have felt given to me, and maintained in me by God, the eye which sees, the ear which hears, the heart which understands the things of his kingdom; and here the entrance hath been ministered into the everlasting kingdom, where God reveals by his Spirit the mysteries of his kingdom, which all else are shut out of, but this seed and the birth which is of it. And when the enemy hath at any time in my travels, by any temptation or device, got in any degree between my soul and this seed; then a darkness, a loss, doubts, fears, troubles, &c. have so far come over my soul.

Quest. 2. But how know I this seed, may some enquire?

Answer. By its nature, by its properties, by its manifesting of itself in my heart. It hath that light, that life, that power in it, which I never met with any-where else. It bruise the head of the Serpent at its pleasure, whereby I know it to be the seed of the woman. It dasheth in pieces (thru' subjection to it) whatever is contrary to God, and bringeth up his holy nature in me. It so bringeth me into the very image of his Son, that what I read in the scriptures concerning the nature, righteousness, and work of salvation by Christ, I find formed and springing up in mine own heart, as I am gathered into, and brought forth in, this seed. Yea, I really feel that I am born of God's Spirit, so far as I am born of this. Here I feel, know, understand, and am acquainted with the substance, the thing itself, that which all the types and figures of the law shadowed out. Here I meet with the circumcision which is without outward hands; the baptism which is without outward water; the supper of the Lord, which is without outward bread or wine; and here I know the true Jew, whose nature, spirit, works, and ways, are all of God, in and through his Son Jesus Christ. And here I must profess, I cannot doubt concerning the things of God; but in the light and anointing of this seed, see both the mystery of iniquity, and the mystery of godliness, and the ways and workings of each spirit, both inwardly and outwardly; and my unity with the one (through the tender mercy, goodness, love, and power of the Lord, all which are herein revealed), and my separation from the other.

And this is the true way of certainty and satisfaction, which is of God, and will stand, when all the several ways of mens inventions will fail of what they promise to men, and fall in the sight of men. For this seed and birth of God are to be acknowledged, and reign in the day of his power, and not another. And it is the day of his power in some, and shall be the day of his power in others; for darkness or death shall not prevail to bring the life of the risen Son into the sepulchre or grave again; but he shall ride on conquering and to conquer, subduing and to subdue, reigning and to reign, until he hath brought all things under the dominion of the Father's power.

A QUESTION answered about the Way of knowing the Motions, Doctrines, and Teachings of CHRIST'S Spirit.

Quest. **H**OW may a man know the motions, doctrines, and teachings of Christ's Spirit inwardly, from the deceiverable movings, appearances, and workings of a contrary spirit? And how may a man know concerning the doctrines that others teach, whether they speak from Christ, or whether they speak of themselves?

Ans. This is a great matter indeed, and he must first receive somewhat from God, who is able to do this. He must be born of the wisdom that is from above, he must receive a spirit of discerning from God, he must receive somewhat of the sheep's ear, somewhat of the holy understanding, whereby he may be made able to distinguish spirituals, and put a difference between the pure and impure; between the pretender to the things of God, and him which is indeed of God. There is a balance of the sanctuary appointed to weigh spiritual things and appearances in; and by this balance alone are they truly and rightly discerned and distinguished; and this balance is in the sanctuary, in the holy heavenly place in Christ Jesus, where the true weight of spiritual things (or things that pretend to be truly spiritual and living, but are not) is given and discerned. But he that weighs without this, he that weighs by his own judgment and understanding, by his own comprehension and conceivings; he weighs by that which is uncertain, changeable, and fallible, and turns up and down according to the appearances of things to him, but judgeth not the righteous judgment, which is from the sense, and in the light, of truth.

Therefore, oh! that men were humble, tender, meek, and sensible of their inability to judge as of themselves, that they might see their need of this gift of God, and wait upon him for it; being in the mean time as the weaned child, not meddling with things too high for them, but keeping and abiding low in fear and subjection to that which the Lord hath already made manifest to them. For what man is there, to whom the Lord hath not already (in his tender mercy and goodness) made somewhat of himself manifest? Who is there, who by the light of the Spirit of God in his conscience, knoweth not some evil which he ought to leave undone, and some good which he ought to do? Now this is the way of God, and the work which man should be exercised in, to feel his mind gathered into that which teacheth this, that he might receive power from the Lord to cease to do the evil which he is thus warned by him of, and to do the good which is thus

required of him. For thus the Spirit of the Lord teacheth and requireth of men, even inwardly in their secret parts, secretly quickening and enlivening them in some measure, and giving them a sense of their sin, death, separation from him, misery and danger thereby; for where there is any sight of sin, and any sense of the burden thereof, there is some life, some light, some little stirrings of the life, and some quickenings thereby, without which this sense could not be. Now mark.

Are not here the drawings of the Father? Are not here the teachings of the Father, though but in a little measure; yet true, yet living? Is not here some little discerning given between the precious and the vile; between somewhat that is of God, and somewhat that is against him? Well then, here is the gift of discerning, though in a poor, low, little, weak measure; and that man who receiveth this, receiveth the beginnings of the gift, somewhat of the gift, whereby he may be able to discern and distinguish a little about spiritual things, so far as the light and ability of the gift in him extendeth.

Now this is man's work (and in this lies his safety), to come hither, abide here, and grow here. Not to judge out of this; to judge no farther concerning the things of God, than this judgeth in him; to keep the judgment which he hath from this; not hearkening to the subtil devices of the enemy, which will strive afterward to cloud his mind, delude and deceive him, with a false appearance of wise reasonings and disputings of his own, or from other men, to make him believe otherwise. And so keeping what ground he hath gained, he is to wait for more of this light, more of this life, more of this virtue, that his soul may grow up and increase therein, that his eye may be strengthened to see further, and his ear to hear further, and his heart to embrace more of the instructions and directions of the Spirit of the Lord, unto and in the way of the kingdom.

Therefore the man that would meet with, and receive from God, the gift of discerning, let him mind the present manifestation of God's light from his Spirit in his heart; embrace that, fall in with that, take heed of the reasonings of the mind against the convictions and demonstrations of God's Spirit, but receive the truth in the love of it, even the lowest appearance of truth, about the least and most despiseable things, and give up faithfully to the Lord therein, without murmuring, without disputing, without consulting with flesh and blood. And he that is faithful to the light of the Spirit (and to the discerning which is thereby) in the little, he shall receive more, he shall have his light and discerning thereby increased, as his need requireth. But he that stands disputing, and would have all his way made clear to him, before he sets one step in it; he is far from becoming that child, which the Father teacheth, and administereth an entrance into the kingdom to.

This, in effect, was the very answer which Christ gave to this thing in the days of his flesh, when there were great disputes concerning his doctrine, how to know whether it was of God or no. What was the resolution he gave of this; *If any man, faith he, will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine*

doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself, John vii. 17. Wouldst thou know of the Son's doctrine? Wouldst thou know whether it be the doctrine of the Son indeed, the doctrine of him who comes from the Father? Yes, very fain, will the upright heart say; oh! that I might know concerning what rises and opens in my heart, whether it be from the Spirit of God, or from the root of deceit in me! Why this is the way; do the Father's will.

Object. Do the Father's will; why what an answer is this! The dispute is about the Father's will. Is not the doctrine of the Son the Father's will? How can I do the Father's will, which the Son is to teach me, until I first know of the Son's doctrine.

Ans. It is true, the Son's doctrine is the Father's will, and thou canst not do the Father's will but as thou receivest the Son's doctrine. But mark; There are disputes in thy mind about somewhat of the Son's doctrine, whether it be his doctrine or no; somewhat also about inward motions, workings, and stirrings in thee, which thou wouldst fain know whence they are. Now the question is concerning the way how thou mayest attain to this; how thou mayest come to a certain and satisfactory knowledge herein? Which is, not by entering into reasonings and disputes about these things whereof thou doubtest, but by coming into that wherein and whereby they are made manifest; and that is by coming into obedience to the Father in that, which he hath already made manifest; for in that light (to them that believe in it) and in obedience thereto (be it ever so little, or the manifestation ever so small), the Father will reveal more, and give to that heart and mind to be sensible of what is of him, and what is of the enemy, so far as is needful for it as yet to know. For wise and absolute judgment in all things, is not necessary for a babe; but sense to know the breast, and to receive from it the milk, by which it is to be fed that it may grow. This is enough in its present state; yet if there be need of strength at any time to still the enemy and the avenger, the Lord will reveal it in the heart, and bring it forth out of the mouths of the babes and sucklings, to the perfecting of his praise.

So mind and learn the way, O ye that are simple-hearted (and truly desire after the Lord, and the purity and power of his kingdom), and take heed of the wrong way; take heed of man's way, which is by consulting with his own wisdom, and weighing things in the balance of his own reason and understanding; and thus he may weigh scriptures written in former ages, and the appearances of God in this age, and err in heart, mind and judgment concerning them both, all his days. But he that waits on the Lord in fear, and in obedience to that which is already made manifest, not desiring knowledge from God in his own will, time, or way, but in the Lord's, who perfectly knows every one's state, and what is fit for him; he shall know concerning every doctrine his heart desireth to be instructed in, in the Lord's season; and in the mean time the Lord will feed him with food convenient,

nient, and cloathe him with cloathing convenient; and there shall be no want to him, who boweth before the Lord in what is already made manifest, and waiteth for his further manifestations and appearances. But the wise hunter after knowledge before the Lord leads, and further than he leads and reaches; this is the first birth, which is excluded the kingdom and the mysteries thereof: this is he who always despised and would still kill the heir, that the inheritance might be his; but the inheritance is appointed for, and given to, another; even to the Lamb's nature, the Lamb's Spirit, the Lamb's innocency, the birth of another wisdom, which is a foolish weak birth in his eye, and not worthy at all to inherit; but it is the Father's pleasure to give the kingdom and inheritance of life everlasting to these.

To speak yet a little more plainly, and bring it yet a little closer to the heart, if it may be. It hath pleased the Father, in this day of his love and power, to gather a little flock out of the world (and all worldly professions of worship and religion) to himself. This flock he hath gathered by a poor, little, low thing in their hearts, exercising them thereby in poor, mean, and contemptible ways to the eye of the world, and to all the professions of man's wisdom; and by this, and concerning this, he testifieth (through those whom he hath gathered) to others. And the testimony doth evidence itself (through the power of the Spirit) to all that wait upon God for an ear, and hear in the simplicity thereof.

Now when we tell men of a divine principle, of a seed of God, wherein their religion is to begin, and from which it is to grow, and whereof they are to be born; this will enter into many, yea many will assent to be drawn so far as to wait inwardly for, and upon this. But now when this begins to stir and move in them, it is in such a way, and many times about such low, mean, contemptible things in their eyes, that they are very apt to despise it, and enter into disputes against it, and so miss of the entrance, and can never thus enter into it; but instead thereof are filled with doubts about the leader and his motions, and puzzled and entangled in their minds, and stopt at the very beginning. And so, though they desire much, and hope much; yet all comes to little, because the enemy hath possessed their minds with a device of his subtilty, as if these were small things and of little concernment. That which they want is the powerful life, the clear light, &c. and so their minds are taken up with thoughts about these great things, and desires after these great things, and they overlook the way wherein and whereby these are to be witnessed and obtained.

For the Lord God, in his infinite wisdom, picked out these contemptible things to exercise his flock by, and to lead them in. And whatever men may think of them, yet none knows (but they who experience it) how hard it is to follow and subject to the Lord in these, and how much they bow down and break the earthly and uncircumcised spirit in a man. Now, Friend, thou who desirest life from God, oh! take heed thou dost not beat back

back the beginnings of his life, and the redemption of thy soul, by despising and overlooking the day of small things. Why may not God chuse to lead thee in the way that he hath led the rest of his flock? Why shouldst not thou also come to deny the customs and vanities of this world (and come into that which is simple and plain), and stand in the will and life of God out of them? Are not the ways, customs, and vanities of the world, of the spirit of the world, and not of the Father? Did they not come from the corrupt part? Are they not of the corrupt part? Do they not please the corrupt part? Must they not be left behind by him that travels into the seed, is one with the seed, and lives in the seed? Why wilt thou stick in these things? Why wilt thou dispute about these things? Oh! feel the Father's drawings, first out of the world, first out of that which is not of the Father, but of the world; that he may draw thee further and further, even into the kingdom and power everlasting, which are many days journey beyond that which thou stickest at.

Now mind and remember this which followeth:

In the days of Christ and his apostles, God chose the foolish things, and the weak things, and things that were not, to hide the path of life, and the mysteries of his kingdom, from the wise searching eye of man in those days. Why may he not chuse the like things now? Why may he not now reveal things to the babes, and not to the wise of this age and generation? Why may it not be to his glory, to have it now said also, *Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe* (where is the learned man)? *Where is the disputer of this world?* Can any of them find out that, or any of them discern that, which God revealeth to his little ones? No, no: They are generally got too high above that little, low, tender, meek, sensible principle, in the faith whereof, and in obedience whereto, the teachings of God are received, and his life and power witnessed. And because of their riches, wisdom, and knowledge out of this, therefore is the entrance into the pure living truth (which cleanseth the mind, and keepeth it clean, which quickeneth it, and keepeth it living), to them so exceeding difficult.

And as the principle is little, the seed of the kingdom little (like a grain of mustard-seed), the least of all seeds; so, why may not its appearance also be little, even in low weak things, despiseable to man's eye and wisdom; which man sees nothing in, and may account of no value? And yet, the power of the cross (which brings down, and slays the corruptible), and the resurrection of the life, may be witnessed and felt in them. *The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men:* and he knoweth what he doth in leading his children in this contemptible path, and by these contemptible exercises, which all that is wise, high, lofty, and aspiring, according to the flesh, may easily overlook and slight, but can hardly stoop down and subject to.

God

218 *Somewhat touching the Gospel-Rest, or Sabbath.*

God is the same that ever he was; and he still appears in the way of his own wisdom, and out of man's; and he that will partake of God's wisdom must deny and keep out of his own. His touches, his drawings, his teachings, his blessings, his love, his peace, his joy, his sweetness, &c. are let forth upon, felt, and enjoyed by the soul, in the new creation, in the new sense, in the denial and passing out of the old.

S O M E W H A T

Touching the GOSPEL-REST, or SABBATH.

WHAT is the gospel-rest? What is the gospel-sabbath? Is it a shadow, as that of the law was? Or is it the substance of that which the law shadowed out?

The law was given by Moses. Moses, by the command of God, gave forth the shadows of the heavenly things under the law; *But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* The true sabbath, the true rest, the law of the Spirit of life, in and to the true Jews, comes by him. The law of Moses had the shadow of the good things to come; which good things themselves the gospel contains, bringing life and immortality to light, and the soul into the enjoyment and possession of the heavenly things themselves.

The apostle disputes the case about both these, *Heb. iv.* both about the seventh day of rest, and about the land of rest; shewing, that they were neither of them the substance; they were but the rests which were to pass away. But besides them, there was a rest remaining, a day of rest remaining, a land of rest remaining; whereof they both (both the outward sabbath of rest, and the land of rest under the law) were figures.

Now, for whom did this rest remain? Why, it remained for the true Jews, for believers, for the spiritual circumcision in the times of the gospel. *And we* (said he) *who have believed, do enter into rest.* The faith gives entrance, the Son's faith; the faith which stands in the power, the faith which is victory, and gives victory over sin and the world, removes the mountains and difficulties which stand in the way, and gives entrance into the gospel-rest. Faith, which is from and of the power of the endless life, puts sin under, brings down self, gathers man into a new principle, brings man forth in a new principle, causeth him to live and act in a new principle, &c. And as man comes thither, and that life riseth and hath power in him, it causeth him to rest from his own works, and to wait for and experience God, in and through Christ, to work all, and be all in him.

The apostle Peter also speaks of this rest, and declares how it is attained, even by suffering in the flesh, *He that hath suffered* (saith he) *in the flesh, hath*

Somewhat touching the Gospel-Rest, or Sabbath 119

Sabbath ceased from sin. 1 Peter iv. 1. It is the fleshly part, the motions in the flesh, from whence sin ariseth.

Lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin. Now Christ hath prepared and appointed a cross, a spiritual yoke, to bring down the flesh, which causeth great suffering in the flesh to him that taketh it upon him. To deny all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, motion, desire, and delight of the fleshly mind and nature, there is a sore suffering to the earthly part; but yet this bringeth down the earthly part in all that take it up, and helpeth and causeth to cease from sin. And he that hath taken up the cross wholly, and felt the thorough work of it, and suffered in the flesh the parting with and crucifying all that is of the flesh, that which would cause him to sin is slain in him, and he ceaseth from sin. Then he is in the rest; then he keeps the rest fully; then he knows the yoke and cross, which was once burdensome to him, to become easy and delightful, that being worn out in him to which it was painful.

Now he that is in measure delivered, that hath in measure suffered, findeth some rest, and may in some measure keep the sabbath; yea, in the faith, the weakest babe (abiding there) cannot but keep the sabbath, and offer up the sacrifices, and perform the services thereof to the Lord. For the worship of the New-Testament relates not to outward times or days; but is in the Spirit, in the truth, in the name, in the power, in the substance, on the day, and in the times and seasons which the Lord hath made, and makes, in the spirits of his people.

And here that scripture is witnessed to those that are born of the Spirit, and live in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit: *sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Who are not under the law, but under grace? Why they that are gathered by the grace, that hear the voice of God in the grace, drawing and enabling them to follow; they whom the grace overshadows from the power and dominion of sin; they are under it, they are sheltered, saved, and preserved by it.

He that is born of God sinneth not, but obeyeth the grace; but he that committeth sin, is the servant of sin, and not yet made free by the grace and power of the Son from it. Yea, the Son gives that freedom in his day from sin, and the power of Satan, as they that are out of the light of his day cannot so much as believe; but they that are gathered into, and walk in the light thereof, they witness the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, making them free from the law of sin and death. What! is the stronger than the strong-man come, with his law and power of the endless life, and shall not he manifest his dominion in the heart over the law of sin and death? Yea, as it is received, and let in, it works out, overcomes, bears down, over-runs the law of sin and death; and that promise is witnessed, fulfilled, *O death! I will be thy death.*

And if God, by the power and breath of his Holy Spirit, with the living powerful laws thereof, kill sin and death in the heart, what shall make them
alive

1020 *Somewhat touching the Gospel-~~Rest~~, or Sabbath.*

~~wise~~ against No, no, then they are dead indeed; and the kingdom and reign of Christ is witnessed in that soul. A ~~1~~ ~~2~~ ~~3~~ ~~4~~ ~~5~~ ~~6~~ ~~7~~ ~~8~~ ~~9~~ ~~10~~ ~~11~~ ~~12~~ ~~13~~ ~~14~~ ~~15~~ ~~16~~ ~~17~~ ~~18~~ ~~19~~ ~~20~~ ~~21~~ ~~22~~ ~~23~~ ~~24~~ ~~25~~ ~~26~~ ~~27~~ ~~28~~ ~~29~~ ~~30~~ ~~31~~ ~~32~~ ~~33~~ ~~34~~ ~~35~~ ~~36~~ ~~37~~ ~~38~~ ~~39~~ ~~40~~ ~~41~~ ~~42~~ ~~43~~ ~~44~~ ~~45~~ ~~46~~ ~~47~~ ~~48~~ ~~49~~ ~~50~~ ~~51~~ ~~52~~ ~~53~~ ~~54~~ ~~55~~ ~~56~~ ~~57~~ ~~58~~ ~~59~~ ~~60~~ ~~61~~ ~~62~~ ~~63~~ ~~64~~ ~~65~~ ~~66~~ ~~67~~ ~~68~~ ~~69~~ ~~70~~ ~~71~~ ~~72~~ ~~73~~ ~~74~~ ~~75~~ ~~76~~ ~~77~~ ~~78~~ ~~79~~ ~~80~~ ~~81~~ ~~82~~ ~~83~~ ~~84~~ ~~85~~ ~~86~~ ~~87~~ ~~88~~ ~~89~~ ~~90~~ ~~91~~ ~~92~~ ~~93~~ ~~94~~ ~~95~~ ~~96~~ ~~97~~ ~~98~~ ~~99~~ ~~100~~ ~~101~~ ~~102~~ ~~103~~ ~~104~~ ~~105~~ ~~106~~ ~~107~~ ~~108~~ ~~109~~ ~~110~~ ~~111~~ ~~112~~ ~~113~~ ~~114~~ ~~115~~ ~~116~~ ~~117~~ ~~118~~ ~~119~~ ~~120~~ ~~121~~ ~~122~~ ~~123~~ ~~124~~ ~~125~~ ~~126~~ ~~127~~ ~~128~~ ~~129~~ ~~130~~ ~~131~~ ~~132~~ ~~133~~ ~~134~~ ~~135~~ ~~136~~ ~~137~~ ~~138~~ ~~139~~ ~~140~~ ~~141~~ ~~142~~ ~~143~~ ~~144~~ ~~145~~ ~~146~~ ~~147~~ ~~148~~ ~~149~~ ~~150~~ ~~151~~ ~~152~~ ~~153~~ ~~154~~ ~~155~~ ~~156~~ ~~157~~ ~~158~~ ~~159~~ ~~160~~ ~~161~~ ~~162~~ ~~163~~ ~~164~~ ~~165~~ ~~166~~ ~~167~~ ~~168~~ ~~169~~ ~~170~~ ~~171~~ ~~172~~ ~~173~~ ~~174~~ ~~175~~ ~~176~~ ~~177~~ ~~178~~ ~~179~~ ~~180~~ ~~181~~ ~~182~~ ~~183~~ ~~184~~ ~~185~~ ~~186~~ ~~187~~ ~~188~~ ~~189~~ ~~190~~ ~~191~~ ~~192~~ ~~193~~ ~~194~~ ~~195~~ ~~196~~ ~~197~~ ~~198~~ ~~199~~ ~~200~~ ~~201~~ ~~202~~ ~~203~~ ~~204~~ ~~205~~ ~~206~~ ~~207~~ ~~208~~ ~~209~~ ~~210~~ ~~211~~ ~~212~~ ~~213~~ ~~214~~ ~~215~~ ~~216~~ ~~217~~ ~~218~~ ~~219~~ ~~220~~ ~~221~~ ~~222~~ ~~223~~ ~~224~~ ~~225~~ ~~226~~ ~~227~~ ~~228~~ ~~229~~ ~~230~~ ~~231~~ ~~232~~ ~~233~~ ~~234~~ ~~235~~ ~~236~~ ~~237~~ ~~238~~ ~~239~~ ~~240~~ ~~241~~ ~~242~~ ~~243~~ ~~244~~ ~~245~~ ~~246~~ ~~247~~ ~~248~~ ~~249~~ ~~250~~ ~~251~~ ~~252~~ ~~253~~ ~~254~~ ~~255~~ ~~256~~ ~~257~~ ~~258~~ ~~259~~ ~~260~~ ~~261~~ ~~262~~ ~~263~~ ~~264~~ ~~265~~ ~~266~~ ~~267~~ ~~268~~ ~~269~~ ~~270~~ ~~271~~ ~~272~~ ~~273~~ ~~274~~ ~~275~~ ~~276~~ ~~277~~ ~~278~~ ~~279~~ ~~280~~ ~~281~~ ~~282~~ ~~283~~ ~~284~~ ~~285~~ ~~286~~ ~~287~~ ~~288~~ ~~289~~ ~~290~~ ~~291~~ ~~292~~ ~~293~~ ~~294~~ ~~295~~ ~~296~~ ~~297~~ ~~298~~ ~~299~~ ~~300~~ ~~301~~ ~~302~~ ~~303~~ ~~304~~ ~~305~~ ~~306~~ ~~307~~ ~~308~~ ~~309~~ ~~310~~ ~~311~~ ~~312~~ ~~313~~ ~~314~~ ~~315~~ ~~316~~ ~~317~~ ~~318~~ ~~319~~ ~~320~~ ~~321~~ ~~322~~ ~~323~~ ~~324~~ ~~325~~ ~~326~~ ~~327~~ ~~328~~ ~~329~~ ~~330~~ ~~331~~ ~~332~~ ~~333~~ ~~334~~ ~~335~~ ~~336~~ ~~337~~ ~~338~~ ~~339~~ ~~340~~ ~~341~~ ~~342~~ ~~343~~ ~~344~~ ~~345~~ ~~346~~ ~~347~~ ~~348~~ ~~349~~ ~~350~~ ~~351~~ ~~352~~ ~~353~~ ~~354~~ ~~355~~ ~~356~~ ~~357~~ ~~358~~ ~~359~~ ~~360~~ ~~361~~ ~~362~~ ~~363~~ ~~364~~ ~~365~~ ~~366~~ ~~367~~ ~~368~~ ~~369~~ ~~370~~ ~~371~~ ~~372~~ ~~373~~ ~~374~~ ~~375~~ ~~376~~ ~~377~~ ~~378~~ ~~379~~ ~~380~~ ~~381~~ ~~382~~ ~~383~~ ~~384~~ ~~385~~ ~~386~~ ~~387~~ ~~388~~ ~~389~~ ~~390~~ ~~391~~ ~~392~~ ~~393~~ ~~394~~ ~~395~~ ~~396~~ ~~397~~ ~~398~~ ~~399~~ ~~400~~ ~~401~~ ~~402~~ ~~403~~ ~~404~~ ~~405~~ ~~406~~ ~~407~~ ~~408~~ ~~409~~ ~~410~~ ~~411~~ ~~412~~ ~~413~~ ~~414~~ ~~415~~ ~~416~~ ~~417~~ ~~418~~ ~~419~~ ~~420~~ ~~421~~ ~~422~~ ~~423~~ ~~424~~ ~~425~~ ~~426~~ ~~427~~ ~~428~~ ~~429~~ ~~430~~ ~~431~~ ~~432~~ ~~433~~ ~~434~~ ~~435~~ ~~436~~ ~~437~~ ~~438~~ ~~439~~ ~~440~~ ~~441~~ ~~442~~ ~~443~~ ~~444~~ ~~445~~ ~~446~~ ~~447~~ ~~448~~ ~~449~~ ~~450~~ ~~451~~ ~~452~~ ~~453~~ ~~454~~ ~~455~~ ~~456~~ ~~457~~ ~~458~~ ~~459~~ ~~460~~ ~~461~~ ~~462~~ ~~463~~ ~~464~~ ~~465~~ ~~466~~ ~~467~~ ~~468~~ ~~469~~ ~~470~~ ~~471~~ ~~472~~ ~~473~~ ~~474~~ ~~475~~ ~~476~~ ~~477~~ ~~478~~ ~~479~~ ~~480~~ ~~481~~ ~~482~~ ~~483~~ ~~484~~ ~~485~~ ~~486~~ ~~487~~ ~~488~~ ~~489~~ ~~490~~ ~~491~~ ~~492~~ ~~493~~ ~~494~~ ~~495~~ ~~496~~ ~~497~~ ~~498~~ ~~499~~ ~~500~~ ~~501~~ ~~502~~ ~~503~~ ~~504~~ ~~505~~ ~~506~~ ~~507~~ ~~508~~ ~~509~~ ~~510~~ ~~511~~ ~~512~~ ~~513~~ ~~514~~ ~~515~~ ~~516~~ ~~517~~ ~~518~~ ~~519~~ ~~520~~ ~~521~~ ~~522~~ ~~523~~ ~~524~~ ~~525~~ ~~526~~ ~~527~~ ~~528~~ ~~529~~ ~~530~~ ~~531~~ ~~532~~ ~~533~~ ~~534~~ ~~535~~ ~~536~~ ~~537~~ ~~538~~ ~~539~~ ~~540~~ ~~541~~ ~~542~~ ~~543~~ ~~544~~ ~~545~~ ~~546~~ ~~547~~ ~~548~~ ~~549~~ ~~550~~ ~~551~~ ~~552~~ ~~553~~ ~~554~~ ~~555~~ ~~556~~ ~~557~~ ~~558~~ ~~559~~ ~~560~~ ~~561~~ ~~562~~ ~~563~~ ~~564~~ ~~565~~ ~~566~~ ~~567~~ ~~568~~ ~~569~~ ~~570~~ ~~571~~ ~~572~~ ~~573~~ ~~574~~ ~~575~~ ~~576~~ ~~577~~ ~~578~~ ~~579~~ ~~580~~ ~~581~~ ~~582~~ ~~583~~ ~~584~~ ~~585~~ ~~586~~ ~~587~~ ~~588~~ ~~589~~ ~~590~~ ~~591~~ ~~592~~ ~~593~~ ~~594~~ ~~595~~ ~~596~~ ~~597~~ ~~598~~ ~~599~~ ~~600~~ ~~601~~ ~~602~~ ~~603~~ ~~604~~ ~~605~~ ~~606~~ ~~607~~ ~~608~~ ~~609~~ ~~610~~ ~~611~~ ~~612~~ ~~613~~ ~~614~~ ~~615~~ ~~616~~ ~~617~~ ~~618~~ ~~619~~ ~~620~~ ~~621~~ ~~622~~ ~~623~~ ~~624~~ ~~625~~ ~~626~~ ~~627~~ ~~628~~ ~~629~~ ~~630~~ ~~631~~ ~~632~~ ~~633~~ ~~634~~ ~~635~~ ~~636~~ ~~637~~ ~~638~~ ~~639~~ ~~640~~ ~~641~~ ~~642~~ ~~643~~ ~~644~~ ~~645~~ ~~646~~ ~~647~~ ~~648~~ ~~649~~ ~~650~~ ~~651~~ ~~652~~ ~~653~~ ~~654~~ ~~655~~ ~~656~~ ~~657~~ ~~658~~ ~~659~~ ~~660~~ ~~661~~ ~~662~~ ~~663~~ ~~664~~ ~~665~~ ~~666~~ ~~667~~ ~~668~~ ~~669~~ ~~670~~ ~~671~~ ~~672~~ ~~673~~ ~~674~~ ~~675~~ ~~676~~ ~~677~~ ~~678~~ ~~679~~ ~~680~~ ~~681~~ ~~682~~ ~~683~~ ~~684~~ ~~685~~ ~~686~~ ~~687~~ ~~688~~ ~~689~~ ~~690~~ ~~691~~ ~~692~~ ~~693~~ ~~694~~ ~~695~~ ~~696~~ ~~697~~ ~~698~~ ~~699~~ ~~700~~ ~~701~~ ~~702~~ ~~703~~ ~~704~~ ~~705~~ ~~706~~ ~~707~~ ~~708~~ ~~709~~ ~~710~~ ~~711~~ ~~712~~ ~~713~~ ~~714~~ ~~715~~ ~~716~~ ~~717~~ ~~718~~ ~~719~~ ~~720~~ ~~721~~ ~~722~~ ~~723~~ ~~724~~ ~~725~~ ~~726~~ ~~727~~ ~~728~~ ~~729~~ ~~730~~ ~~731~~ ~~732~~ ~~733~~ ~~734~~ ~~735~~ ~~736~~ ~~737~~ ~~738~~ ~~739~~ ~~740~~ ~~741~~ ~~742~~ ~~743~~ ~~744~~ ~~745~~ ~~746~~ ~~747~~ ~~748~~ ~~749~~ ~~750~~ ~~751~~ ~~752~~ ~~753~~ ~~754~~ ~~755~~ ~~756~~ ~~757~~ ~~758~~ ~~759~~ ~~760~~ ~~761~~ ~~762~~ ~~763~~ ~~764~~ ~~765~~ ~~766~~ ~~767~~ ~~768~~ ~~769~~ ~~770~~ ~~771~~ ~~772~~ ~~773~~ ~~774~~ ~~775~~ ~~776~~ ~~777~~ ~~778~~ ~~779~~ ~~780~~ ~~781~~ ~~782~~ ~~783~~ ~~784~~ ~~785~~ ~~786~~ ~~787~~ ~~788~~ ~~789~~ ~~790~~ ~~791~~ ~~792~~ ~~793~~ ~~794~~ ~~795~~ ~~796~~ ~~797~~ ~~798~~ ~~799~~ ~~800~~ ~~801~~ ~~802~~ ~~803~~ ~~804~~ ~~805~~ ~~806~~ ~~807~~ ~~808~~ ~~809~~ ~~810~~ ~~811~~ ~~812~~ ~~813~~ ~~814~~ ~~815~~ ~~816~~ ~~817~~ ~~818~~ ~~819~~ ~~820~~ ~~821~~ ~~822~~ ~~823~~ ~~824~~ ~~825~~ ~~826~~ ~~827~~ ~~828~~ ~~829~~ ~~830~~ ~~831~~ ~~832~~ ~~833~~ ~~834~~ ~~835~~ ~~836~~ ~~837~~ ~~838~~ ~~839~~ ~~840~~ ~~841~~ ~~842~~ ~~843~~ ~~844~~ ~~845~~ ~~846~~ ~~847~~ ~~848~~ ~~849~~ ~~850~~ ~~851~~ ~~852~~ ~~853~~ ~~854~~ ~~855~~ ~~856~~ ~~857~~ ~~858~~ ~~859~~ ~~860~~ ~~861~~ ~~862~~ ~~863~~ ~~864~~ ~~865~~ ~~866~~ ~~867~~ ~~868~~ ~~869~~ ~~870~~ ~~871~~ ~~872~~ ~~873~~ ~~874~~ ~~875~~ ~~876~~ ~~877~~ ~~878~~ ~~879~~ ~~880~~ ~~881~~ ~~882~~ ~~883~~ ~~884~~ ~~885~~ ~~886~~ ~~887~~ ~~888~~ ~~889~~ ~~890~~ ~~891~~ ~~892~~ ~~893~~ ~~894~~ ~~895~~ ~~896~~ ~~897~~ ~~898~~ ~~899~~ ~~900~~ ~~901~~ ~~902~~ ~~903~~ ~~904~~ ~~905~~ ~~906~~ ~~907~~ ~~908~~ ~~909~~ ~~910~~ ~~911~~ ~~912~~ ~~913~~ ~~914~~ ~~915~~ ~~916~~ ~~917~~ ~~918~~ ~~919~~ ~~920~~ ~~921~~ ~~922~~ ~~923~~ ~~924~~ ~~925~~ ~~926~~ ~~927~~ ~~928~~ ~~929~~ ~~930~~ ~~931~~ ~~932~~ ~~933~~ ~~934~~ ~~935~~ ~~936~~ ~~937~~ ~~938~~ ~~939~~ ~~940~~ ~~941~~ ~~942~~ ~~943~~ ~~944~~ ~~945~~ ~~946~~ ~~947~~ ~~948~~ ~~949~~ ~~950~~ ~~951~~ ~~952~~ ~~953~~ ~~954~~ ~~955~~ ~~956~~ ~~957~~ ~~958~~ ~~959~~ ~~960~~ ~~961~~ ~~962~~ ~~963~~ ~~964~~ ~~965~~ ~~966~~ ~~967~~ ~~968~~ ~~969~~ ~~970~~ ~~971~~ ~~972~~ ~~973~~ ~~974~~ ~~975~~ ~~976~~ ~~977~~ ~~978~~ ~~979~~ ~~980~~ ~~981~~ ~~982~~ ~~983~~ ~~984~~ ~~985~~ ~~986~~ ~~987~~ ~~988~~ ~~989~~ ~~990~~ ~~991~~ ~~992~~ ~~993~~ ~~994~~ ~~995~~ ~~996~~ ~~997~~ ~~998~~ ~~999~~ ~~1000~~ ~~1001~~ ~~1002~~ ~~1003~~ ~~1004~~ ~~1005~~ ~~1006~~ ~~1007~~ ~~1008~~ ~~1009~~ ~~1010~~ ~~1011~~ ~~1012~~ ~~1013~~ ~~1014~~ ~~1015~~ ~~1016~~ ~~1017~~ ~~1018~~ ~~1019~~ ~~1020~~ ~~1021~~ ~~1022~~ ~~1023~~ ~~1024~~ ~~1025~~ ~~1026~~ ~~1027~~ ~~1028~~ ~~1029~~ ~~1030~~ ~~1031~~ ~~1032~~ ~~1033~~ ~~1034~~ ~~1035~~ ~~1036~~ ~~1037~~ ~~1038~~ ~~1039~~ ~~1040~~ ~~1041~~ ~~1042~~ ~~1043~~ ~~1044~~ ~~1045~~ ~~1046~~ ~~1047~~ ~~1048~~ ~~1049~~ ~~1050~~ ~~1051~~ ~~1052~~ ~~1053~~ ~~1054~~ ~~1055~~ ~~1056~~ ~~1057~~ ~~1058~~ ~~1059~~ ~~1060~~ ~~1061~~ ~~1062~~ ~~1063~~ ~~1064~~ ~~1065~~ ~~1066~~ ~~1067~~ ~~1068~~ ~~1069~~ ~~1070~~ ~~1071~~ ~~1072~~ ~~1073~~ ~~1074~~ ~~1075~~ ~~1076~~ ~~1077~~ ~~1078~~ ~~1079~~ ~~1080~~ ~~1081~~ ~~1082~~ ~~1083~~ ~~1084~~ ~~1085~~ ~~1086~~ ~~1087~~ ~~1088~~ ~~1089~~ ~~1090~~ ~~1091~~ ~~1092~~ ~~1093~~ ~~1094~~ ~~1095~~ ~~1096~~ ~~1097~~ ~~1098~~ ~~1099~~ ~~1100~~ ~~1101~~ ~~1102~~ ~~1103~~ ~~1104~~ ~~1105~~ ~~1106~~ ~~1107~~ ~~1108~~ ~~1109~~ ~~1110~~ ~~1111~~ ~~1112~~ ~~1113~~ ~~1114~~ ~~1115~~ ~~1116~~ ~~1117~~ ~~1118~~ ~~1119~~ ~~1120~~ ~~1121~~ ~~1122~~ ~~1123~~ ~~1124~~ ~~1125~~ ~~1126~~ ~~1127~~ ~~1128~~ ~~1129~~ ~~1130~~ ~~1131~~ ~~1132~~ ~~1133~~ ~~1134~~ ~~1135~~ ~~1136~~ ~~1137~~ ~~1138~~ ~~1139~~ ~~1140~~ ~~1141~~ ~~1142~~ ~~1143~~ ~~1144~~ ~~1145~~ ~~1146~~ ~~1147~~ ~~1148~~ ~~1149~~ ~~1150~~ ~~1151~~ ~~1152~~ ~~1153~~ ~~1154~~ ~~1155~~ ~~1156~~ ~~1157~~ ~~1158~~ ~~1159~~ ~~1160~~ ~~1161~~ ~~1162~~ ~~1163~~ ~~1164~~ ~~1165~~ ~~1166~~ ~~1167~~ ~~1168~~ ~~1169~~ ~~1170~~ ~~1171~~ ~~1172~~ ~~1173~~ ~~1174~~ ~~1175~~ ~~1176~~ ~~1177~~ ~~1178~~ ~~1179~~ ~~1180~~ ~~1181~~ ~~1182~~ ~~1183~~ ~~1184~~ ~~1185~~ ~~1186~~ ~~1187~~ ~~1188~~ ~~1189~~ ~~1190~~ ~~1191~~ ~~1192~~ ~~1193~~ ~~1194~~ ~~1195~~ ~~1196~~ ~~1197~~ ~~1198~~ ~~1199~~ ~~1200~~ ~~1201~~ ~~1202~~ ~~1203~~ ~~1204~~ ~~1205~~ ~~1206~~ ~~1207~~ ~~1208~~ ~~1209~~ ~~1210~~ ~~1211~~ ~~1212~~ ~~1213~~ ~~1214~~ ~~1215~~ ~~1216~~ ~~1217~~ ~~1218~~ ~~1219~~ ~~1220~~ ~~1221~~ ~~1222~~ ~~1223~~ ~~1224~~ ~~1225~~ ~~1226~~ ~~1227~~ ~~1228~~ ~~1229~~ ~~1230~~ ~~1231~~ ~~1232~~ ~~1233~~ ~~1234~~ ~~1235~~ ~~1236~~ ~~1237~~ ~~1238~~ ~~1239~~ ~~1240~~ ~~1241~~ ~~1242~~ ~~1243~~ ~~1244~~ ~~1245~~ ~~1246~~ ~~1247~~ ~~1248~~ ~~1249~~ ~~1250~~ ~~1251~~ ~~1252~~ ~~1253~~ ~~1254~~ ~~1255~~ ~~1256~~ ~~1257~~ ~~1258~~ ~~1259~~ ~~1260~~ ~~1261~~ ~~1262~~ ~~1263~~ ~~1264~~ ~~1265~~ ~~1266~~ ~~1267~~ ~~1268~~ ~~1269~~ ~~1270~~ ~~1271~~ ~~1272~~ ~~1273~~ ~~1274~~ ~~1275~~ ~~1276~~ ~~1277~~ ~~1278~~ ~~1279~~ ~~1280~~ ~~1281~~ ~~1282~~ ~~1283~~ ~~1284~~ ~~1285~~ ~~1286~~ ~~1287~~ ~~1288~~ ~~1289~~ ~~1290~~ ~~1291~~ ~~1292~~ ~~1293~~ ~~1294~~ ~~1295~~ ~~1296~~ ~~1297~~ ~~1298~~ ~~1299~~ ~~1300~~ ~~1301~~ ~~1302~~ ~~1303~~ ~~1304~~ ~~1305~~ ~~1306~~ ~~1307~~ ~~1308~~ ~~1309~~ ~~1310~~ ~~1311~~ ~~1312~~ ~~1313~~ ~~1314~~ ~~1315~~ ~~1316~~ ~~1317~~ ~~1318~~ ~~1319~~ ~~1320~~ ~~1321~~ ~~1322~~ ~~1323~~ ~~1324~~ ~~1325~~ ~~1326~~ ~~1327~~ ~~1328~~ ~~1329~~ ~~1330~~ ~~1331~~ ~~1332~~ ~~1333~~ ~~1334~~ ~~1335~~ ~~1336~~ ~~1337~~

Query 3. To them that believe in and receive him, doth not Christ give power to become sons to God? And to them that are sons, doth not the Father give the Spirit of the Son? And hath not the Spirit of the Son power over the contrary spirit?

Query 4. Were not the deliverances of the Jews under the law real deliverances from their outward enemies? And are not Christ's deliverances as real from the inward enemies? Whom the Son maketh free, are they not free indeed? Free from sin, free from Satan, being under the shadow of the wing of the Almighty, which preserveth out of the darkness, and guardeth the mind from the evil and danger thereof?

Query 5. Is not Christ stronger than the strong man, whom he cometh to dispossess? Are not his weapons stronger than the weapons of the enemy? Is not he able to dispossess him, to cast him out, to spoil him of his goods and strength? And when he hath gained the house, is not he able to cleanse it, and garnish, and keep it clean and pure in the way of his covenant, against all the enemy can do?

Query 6. Doth not Christ dwell in the heart by faith? And is not Christ's nature and Spirit pure, and will he dwell in any thing that is impure? Is not the spiritual temple under the gospel to be as pure inwardly as ever the outward temple under the law was to be pure outwardly, or by way of representation? Must not they be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, who witness the Father dwelling in them, and walking in them?

Query 7. Who offer up the incense and the pure offering in the times of the gospel? Can any do it but the sons of Levi, whom the Lord hath purified? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Who can compass the altar of the Lord, or offer up an acceptable offering there, whose heart and hands are not washed in innocency?

Query 8. Is not the worship of the New Testament to be in spirit and truth? Is not the Spirit pure, the truth pure? Can any unclean thing enter into it? Can any be in it, can any worship in it, but they which be cleansed, purified, and changed by it?

Query 9. How did the apostle express the right manner of drawing nigh to God in the spiritual gospel-worship? Was it not to be thus, with the heart cleansed from an evil conscience, and the body washed with clean water? And is not the presence, power, and acceptance of God witnessed by them that appear before him and worship him thus?

Query 10. Had not other lords dominion over the heart, to subdue it to sin, and defile it, before Christ was known and received in his Spirit and power? But when Christ is known and received in his Spirit and power, have the other lords power to do so still? Is not Christ's law, the law of his Spirit of life, able to bring under, and make the soul free from the law of sin and death? Inasmuch as now it may be said in truth, by the souls whom he hath set free, *O Lord, our God! other lords besides thee have*

had dominion over us; but (now henceforward) by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

Query 11. Was it not a brand of ignominy on those who had got the good words and high notions about Christ, but were not in the authority and power of his Spirit, that they had eyes full of adultery, and could not cease from sin? Can any cease from sin but he that receiveth the power? And he that receiveth the power of the new life, is it not natural to him to cease from sin, and unnatural to him to commit it?

Query 12. Is not the Lord the teacher of his people under the new covenant? Was it not promised of old concerning the gospel-times, and is it not fulfilled in the gospel-times, *that all thy children shall be taught of the Lord*? And what doth the Lord teach? Doth he not teach to *cease from doing evil, and to learn to do well*? And shall his children never learn this lesson of him?

Query 13. Whose servants are they that obey unrighteousness? Are they clothed with the strength of God? Do they stand in the power of his might against the power of the enemy? Are they overcomers of the wicked-one? Or are they not rather daily overcome by him?

Query 14. What is the whole armour of God provided and appointed for? Is it not to keep out the enemy wholly? And is it able to do it, or no?

Query 15. Will not Christ say to all men upon the earth, profess they what they will, hope in Christ, and cast themselves upon him for salvation ever so much, and ever so often; yea, though they have received such power from him as to preach in his name, and to cast out devils in his name; yet if they have not so received the power as to overcome sin in their own hearts, and to cause them to cease from working iniquity, though they call him Lord, and cry to him with confidence, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, yet will he not say to them, *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know ye not*; ye are not of the birth of my power; ye are not those which have done my will; ye were never by me redeemed out of the evil-doing; but have still all your days (notwithstanding your profession, notwithstanding your knowledge, notwithstanding your owning me as your Lord, and preaching in my name) been workers of iniquity.

Query 16. He that receiveth the spiritual circumcision and baptism of Christ, doth it not cause him to cease from sin? And doth not the new life spring up in him, which causeth him to live holily to God? He that hath the offending eye plucked out, the offending hand cut off, is not that taken away from him which caused him to sin? And he who is created a new creature in Christ, doth he not naturally do that which is holy and righteous? 1 John iii. 7, 8.

Query 17. Doth not the true faith, the faith of the Son of God, give victory over sin? Can any believer be conquered by the enemy, he standing in the faith, abiding in the covenant? Doth not the power stretched out

out by the Father of life defend the soul in the way of the covenant against all the assaults of the enemies, so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against any here, but the name of the Lord is felt a strong tower against them; and though they encompass like bees, yet in the name of the Lord victory is witnessed over them, and against all that they can do? And doth not the Lord teach and enable his to keep covenant?

Query 18. Was not such a thing witnessed by Paul (and may not such a thing be witnessed by the believing and obedient travellers now), *I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. I know how to want, I know how to abound; every-where, and in all things, I am instructed, &c.* I am armed with the whole armour of God, and taught to stand so upon my guard in the power of his life, that the enemy cannot come at me; but the power of the endless life so preserveth me, as that the evil-one cannot touch me, cannot enter me with any of his temptations in any condition?

Query 19. Was there not such a condition once witnessed, and may it not be witnessed again, of being more than conquerors through the love and power of Christ? When the life doth arise in its power and dominion in the heart, doth it not soon scatter the enemies? Do they not fly away, and are chased at the blast of God's Spirit? When the soul is filled with the love and with the power, is not the land cleansed of what annoyed it? And this, which is sometimes felt by many of the travellers, may it not be an abiding state? Are there not dwelling-places on Mount Sion (on the Mount of God's holiness in the gospel-time), and is not there security from sin, Satan, the soul's enemies, and dangers? *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord;* and will he not fulfil it to those that wait upon him in the way of his covenant?

THE CONCLUSION.

THERE is a principle of darkness in the hearts and minds of men, which is as a seed or root of corruption in them, bringing forth in them fruits of sin and unrighteousness unto death.

And there is also a principle of the pure heavenly light, as a free gift from God, to discover the darkness, turn man's heart against it, and lead him into the way and path of life.

Now as Satan rules in the principle of darkness, and there is the power of death therein; so God rules in the principle of light, and there is the power of life and redemption manifested by God therein.

For this principle is of the Father, of the Son, of the Spirit; yea, the Father, Son, and Spirit are in this principle; and here the soul meets with them, and is brought into union and fellowship with them, and feels the everlasting arm revealed and stretched forth for its delivery from corruption, and the captivity thereof, into the liberty of the Sons of God.

And he that is here meets with the substance of things, and that which all the types of the law shadowed out; meets with the one offering, the cleansing which is thereby, the imputation of righteousness, or of faith unto righteousness; yea, and with somewhat more, even with the everlasting righteousness itself brought into the heart, and dwelling there; inasmuch as his nature is changed (truly changed) his spirit changed, his mind, heart, soul, and conscience changed, his conversation changed, the leopard's spots and the Ethiopian's skin washed away, the deceitfulness of the heart removed, and the new garments of righteousness, life, and salvation put on in the stead thereof; so that he is uncloathed of the evil, unholy nature and spirit, and cloathed with the Spirit of the Lord.

For Christ is really made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. How is that? Why he that once was a fool, is now made wise unto God, and the things of his kingdom, by the mystery of his Son's life and power, revealed in him. He is a child of wisdom, and he hath heard the wisdom of his mother, and learned wisdom of her. So putting on Christ, who is the righteousness, being ingrafted into him, being brought forth in him, he partakes of the sweetness and fatness of the olive-tree, and is renewed into the image of the true righteousness and holiness, and drinks in the virtue and life of the precious promises, wherein and whereby he is made partaker of the divine nature, and so cannot but witness redemption from the earthly corrupt nature.

Now it is not any striving, believing, or obedience of man's own spirit, which can effect this; he may will strongly, he may run hard, and yet never obtain; he may so cast himself upon the mercy of God, and hope concerning his mercy in Christ, as to miss of it.

But the principle of life which is from God, and faith in God from that principle, without fail effects this, and no other faith doth. But out of this are the mysterious images and idols, and subtil workings and devices of the cunning-one, to take up the mind with somewhat which appears as substantial and truly excellent, but is not so indeed. His birth hath desires after the kingdom (and makes no question but it shall be his), wills, runs, strives, believes, hopes, prays, reads scriptures, observes duties and ordinances; and in these they meet with a wrong knowledge, a wrong sanctification, a wrong joy, a wrong confidence and assurance, a wrong rest and peace; in which there may be a great warmth, and seeming life and pleasure, from the fire and sparks of their own kindling and blowing up, which the mind that is blinded by him can hardly suspect that it is not true; yea, may be taken with it, and strongly justify it in its own thoughts for the true, and set it above that that is indeed the true. This, this is the great mystery of iniquity, which hath great subtilty of deceivableness in it, to pick up and steal away the good seed out of the heart, and to steal in a false image and likeness thereof, which may have a more glorious appearance to man's eye than the true seed itself (for that is the least of all seeds,

seeds, makes the least shew of any, but hath not the same nature, virtue, and power.

Ah! the Lord God of tender mercy help all the poor souls that breathe after him, that they may not be thus deceived. And those that are thus deceived, and in the share of the enemy (and do not witness the faith which hath the Son's dominion in it, and gives victory over sin, Satan, and the world, and wherein the blood of sprinkling, which livingly washeth, is felt, in the light of life, wherein the redeemed walk to the praise of their redeemer); the Lord guide them also to that wherein all deceits are made manifest, and where the truth, which is of the Son, is made to shine in such who were once in the barren places, and in the thick darkness, but now are light in the Lord, and who have a dwelling-place with the Lord in his light, which is the pure and everlasting habitation. Amen.

A P O S T R I P T,

C O N T A I N I N G

Some further QUERIES concerning the NEW COVENANT.

Query 1. **W**HAT is the new covenant? Is it not an agreement between God and the soul in Christ, according to the law of faith, as the old covenant was an agreement between God and the people of the Jews, according to the law of works?

Query 2. Who is the Mediator of this covenant? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ? Doth not he prepare the heart for the covenant, bring into the covenant, keep in the covenant, preserve peace between God and the soul, and keep the soul in the way of truth and peace?

Query 3. Who is the Shepherd, King, and Prophet in this covenant? Is it any other than Christ the Mediator? Is not he the King and Prophet raised up to rule in righteousness, and to instruct in the path of life? And is not his Spirit able to teach and instruct in all things, and able to govern and rule in righteousness all that are subject to his breathings, quickenings, and holy movings, and instructions in their hearts, who writes his law there, and guides and governs by the law which he writes?

Query 4. How come men into this covenant or holy agreement with God? Is it not by repentance and faith? Is it not by turning from the darkness, which is not of him, to the light, which is of him? Is it not by turning from the spirit of Satan to his Spirit; from the standard and power of the wicked-one, to the standard and power of the Holy One? What is it that God lifts up against the darkness of the enemy, but the light of his Spirit, which discovers where a man hath been (and what he hath done) and gives him

him to repent thereof; and forsake all his dead works, and turn to the life and power which instructs and quickens him, in and by the Holy Spirit? And this is true conversion; and thus a man feels the covenant of sin, death, and hell broken, and enters into a new covenant, a pure covenant, a living covenant, a powerful covenant, and comes to feel those things which the covenant contains, as his condition requires, and as his capacity is made able to receive.

Query 5. How do men come to abide in this covenant? Is there any abiding but according to the entrance? Is there any staying in the covenant, but in and by the faith that lets in? Doth not unbelief and disobedience keep out from it at first? And doth not unbelief and disobedience cut off from it afterwards? For there are sins against this covenant, as well as against the old; and the sins against this are more dangerous to the soul than the sins against the old. *Take heed* (said the apostle) *lest there be in any of you an heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God.* And saith Moses, speaking of the prophet, or angel of this covenant, *Beware of him, and obey his voice; for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him; and whosoever hearkeneth not to this prophet, he shall be cut off.* How can it be otherwise? For he speaks life, and he speaks it in the covenant to the circumcised ear, to the soul in the faith, in the obedience. *Hear, and your souls shall live.* So then he that hears not must needs abide in death; and he that departs from hearing him, must needs return to death.

Query 6. Whether there be any purifying of the heart, or any justification, or keeping the vessel clean, out of the obedience of the truth? *If a man keep my sayings* (saith Christ) *he shall never see death.* *If ye* (saith the apostle) *through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* But if the deeds of the body be not mortified by the Spirit, if a man do not keep the sayings of Christ, doth he, or can he live then? Is not this then the main thing in religion, that a man receive the truth in the faith, and that he feel the power of the Spirit of life bringing him into, and keeping him in, the obedience thereof. For it is the truth that saves; the living truth, the living knowledge, the living faith; the law of the Spirit of life that makes free from the law of sin and death; and it makes free by its powerful working in the mind, working out, and preserving from, that which defiles, captivates, and destroys. For Christ comes with his power to save, with his power to break the bonds of darkness, and to set the captive free: with his power to dislodge and dispossess all the enemies, and sanctify the vessel to himself; and the effects of his power in and upon the heart are his salvation; and he that falleth short of the ministration of the power of life to his soul, and of the effects thereof in his soul, is so far defective in point of salvation: for no man is saved farther than he is redeemed and delivered from that which Christ comes to save him from.

Query 7. Whether the first thing of all to be witnessed in religion is not the Spirit of Christ? Is not the whole work to be done by him? And how

how can a man be certain concerning any work wrought in him, unless he be certain that it is he that works? How can I be certain concerning the knowledge given me, unless I be sure it be he that gives it? How can I be certain concerning any prayers or breathings arising in my heart, unless I be sure they be from him? How can I understand any scripture concerning Christ, or the knowledge of any spiritual thing, unless I be sure he open it to me? And how can I be sure of any thing that he giveth or openeth to me, further than I know him, and have the true sense of him in his nature and operations? So then, if the Spirit be my leader, guide, teacher, instructor in the way of life, in the covenant of life, in the things of the kingdom, in the knowledge of scriptures, &c, it is of great concernment to me to receive that ear and heart from God, which knows and understands his voice; for, for want of this, are all the defects, mistakes, miscarriages, and errors, in and about religion. But as men come to this, they come out of error into certainty, and know the one Christ, the one faith, the one baptism, the one body, the one church, and assembly of the first-born, the pure love, which is of and in the truth, the pure path of the kingdom, the way of holiness, which the ransomed and redeemed walk in; yea, the Lord is One, and his name One among all that are here, and the pure One language, which is of the Spirit, wisdom, and teaching, is here received, and the One voice of the shepherd heard, &c. But out of this are the janglings, strifes, contentions, debates, disputes; subtil, wise, entangling reasonings of the earthly, one with another, and all as one against the heavenly and spiritual.

Query 8. Did not the message which Christ sent his apostles to preach, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, contain the sum of the covenant? What doth God require of the soul, but believing in his Son (which includes repentance from the dead spirit and works), and receiving his baptism? To be baptized into him, into his death, into his life, into his nature, into his spirit; to take up his cross, to bear his yoke, to be circumcised in him and by him, that he may love the Lord his God with all his heart, that the power, virtue, and life of love may constrain him to live wholly in and to God. And then doth not the promise of salvation to him that believeth and is baptized into Christ contain writing the law in the heart, putting the fear into the heart; putting the Spirit within to become the teacher, guide, strength, and comforter, and whatsoever else is necessary to the soul in the way to the kingdom?

Query 9. How is God merciful to men's iniquities, and remembers their sins no more? Is it not in the covenant, and according to the covenant? Is there not a warfare to be accomplished before the soul come to witness the perfect blotting out of sin? Is not Christ the Mediator, the judge to whom all judgment is committed? And doth not he judge his people for their transgressions against the law of his Spirit and life? And must not the soul, who will witness the days of refreshment, and the perfect blotting out

of

of sin therein, wait upon the Lord in the way of his judgments, even till sin be judged and brought under, and God's righteousness perfectly revealed? Under Moses's law every transgression received a just recompence of reward, and shall he escape in the gospel who grieves the Spirit, who despises the Son, and gives ear to the enemy? Nay, nay; the same covenant that holds forth mercy to the tender broken-hearted, to the believing, to the obedient, contains also righteous judgment against the transgressor of this covenant. Yea, judgment begins at the house of God, and ceaseth not till that cease which judgment is to. The Lord shall judge his people; shall not Christ judge his own family? Yes, yes; they that are of the family, and in the true sense, feel the Lord pleading with whatever is contrary to him in them, and they can rejoice therein, and sing of mercy and judgment, after the Lord hath done his work in them, and brought forth the quiet fruit of righteousness in their hearts thereby.

Blessed is he that experienceth these things, witnessing that from the Lord which preserveth out of all mistakes and deceits about them.

ENQUIRY after TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS,

AND

After the People whom the LORD establisheth, and will
establish therein ;

In some **QUERIES** on ISAIAH lviii. and also on Chap. liv.

Query 1. **A**RE there any people to be found who exceed the state spoken of in *ver. 2.* of seeking God daily, and delighting to know his ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God? They ask of me, said the Lord, the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Are there not many professions and sorts of professors at this day, who in God's sight fall short of this state, and yet think highly of themselves? Yet these the prophet of the Lord was not to spare; but to lift up his voice like a trumpet against them, because of their transgression and sin which they committed, notwithstanding their thus daily seeking the Lord.

Query 2. What was the transgression and the sins which the prophet was not to spare them in, but lift up his voice like a trumpet against them for? Was it not (among other things) for their wrong fasting, their wrong afflicting their souls, their wrong seeking of God, out of the meek, tender, merciful spirit? Doth God require such fasting or praying of any man? Or will the Lord accept such fasting or praying at any man's hand? Ah! how many fast and pray at this day, who never rightly considered, nor truly understood, what the fastings, and what the prayers are which God requireth, and which alone he will accept!

Query 3. What is the fast which God requireth, and will accept in all ages? Is not this it, *To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke?* &c. *ver. 6, 7.* Who can understand or learn this fast but he that is taught of God?

Query 4. Are there any whose light breaks forth as the morning, and whose health springs forth speedily, and whose righteousness goeth before them, and whom the glory of the Lord gathereth up, or is a reward to

130 *An Enquiry after Truth and Righteousness, &c.*

(as is promised to those who observe this fast), and whom the Lord is ready to hear and answer in all that they call upon him for, as *ver. 8, 9*? Doth not God teach his children in the new covenant to observe this fast? And they who are taught by him to keep it (and do faithfully keep it), do they not inherit this promise?

Query 5. Are there any now among the sons of men, whose light hath risen in obscurity, and whose darkness hath become as noon-day? Whom the Lord guideth continually, and whose soul he satisfieth in drougths, and makes fat their bones; and makes them like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not? Surely if there be any, who are truly taught of the Lord to observe that which leads hereto, they cannot miss of enjoying these precious promises; for he is faithful and true who hath promised, *ver. 10, 11*.

Query 6. Are there any at this day, whom God honoureth in building the old waste places, in raising up the foundations of many generations; in repairing the breach, and restoring the paths to dwell in? What are the paths that are to be dwelt in? Are they not the same which the soul is to walk in? Is not the just man's path and his dwelling-place all one, even the light of the living, which he is both to walk and abide in? See *1 John i. 7.* and *Prov. iv. 18*.

It is said concerning Christ, *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked, 1 John ii. 6.* How did Christ walk? Did he not walk in the light of God's Spirit? In subjection to God's Spirit? Was not the fulness given him? Was not the Father always with him? And did not he act in the Father, and the Father in and through him? Now, doth not he give forth a measure of the same Spirit, of the same anointing, of the same power to become sons, unto all his? and are not they to walk according to the measure of light and life they receive from him? And he that walks according to this rule, can he err in so walking? Is not this the pure path, the living path, the path for the ransomed in the days of the gospel, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit? Oh! that men could consider this with the true understanding, and know the way of life in the true sense and experience thereof! That which enlightens and gives life to my soul, is somewhat from Christ, even a measure or appearance of his pure Spirit; it is no less: and the law of life written inwardly is more to the soul than words written outwardly, though all the words that ever come from God's Holy Spirit are very precious, and greatly useful, to those to whom he vouchsafeth to give the understanding of them.

Query 7. What is the sabbath spoken of, *ver. 13*? Is it the law-sabbath, or the gospel-sabbath? Is it inferior in nature to the fast before-mentioned? What is God's holy day, which is the soul's delight, the holy of the

An Enquiry after Truth and Righteousness, &c. 131

the Lord, honourable, wherein the soul's that enter into the true rest (by faith in him who is life) honour the Lord, in ceasing from their own ways, pleasures, and words? See also *Heb.* iv. 3. and 10.

Query 8. They that keep God's holy sabbath, do they not delight themselves in the Lord? Do they not feel the pleasure of his day, and of his appearance in his day? Are not these of the true seed of Jacob (who prevail with the Lord for the blessing)? And doth not the Lord feed them with the heritage of Jacob their Father, even with the blessing of the covenant of life and peace for evermore.

S O M E

Q U E R I E S

O N

I S A I A H LIV.

Query 1. **I**S there such a state to be witnessed, either in the particular, or in the general, wherein the womb that was barren shall travail and bear, and sing for joy of heart and spirit before the Lord? See *ver.* 1.

Query 2. Is there such a state to be witnessed, as of the Maker to become the husband? Is not this a glorious state indeed, and a name better than of sons and daughters, signifying nearer intimacy and union than any other relation with the Holy One, the redeemer of Israel? And do not such as come to this state (even to be married to the Lamb), partake more abundantly of his redeeming power and holy presence? See *ver.* 6.

Query 3. Are there some so visited and redeemed by the Lord, as that they shall never be cast off more, as that the floods of wrath shall never overtake them more, nor the covenant of their peace be removed? Ah! precious state! Blessed are they doubtless, who have been so visited and redeemed by God's mercy, as to be made partakers of it.

Query 4. Who is this that hath been afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted? Have there been any such in our days, who have been deeply afflicted, for want of the presence of the Lord God of their life, who have been tossed up and down with tempest after tempest, and could meet with no comforter to speak a word in season to their weary souls? And

hath the Lord appeared to these, visited these, built upon these, comforted these? Surely then, the poor whom he hath raised out of the dust, and the needy whom he hath lifted off from the dunghill, cannot but praise his name.

Query 5. Who is this, whose stones God lays with fair colours, and her foundation with sapphires? Whose windows God makes of agates, and her gates of carbuncles, and all her borders of pleasant stones? Was not the covenant of life so adorned in the apostles days? And is she not so adorned now again?

Query 6. Whose children are they, who shall be all taught of the Lord, and whose peace shall be great, who shall be established in righteousness, who shall be far from oppression, so that they shall not fear; and from terror, so that it shall not come near them? Are there such a generation of the heavenly birth, of the covenant of life, brought forth in this our day, who sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and make him their fear and their dread, but are not terrified with the wicked one, nor with the snares and engines of the ungodly? Surely they who are taught of God, have peace from him and in him, and are established in the righteous spirit and life of his Son; they are like Mount Sion, which cannot be shaken or removed, by all the terrors and oppressing devices of the ungodly.

Query 7. By whom do they gather together, who gather together against such a people? Certainly it is not by the Lord, nor by any advice or counsel from him; but by the advice of that spirit which opposeth himself against the power and work of the Lord: and that spirit must fall for the sakes of those whom God hath raised up by his power, and undertaketh to defend. How tender was God of Israel after the flesh in the day of his delivering them! See *1 Chron.* xvi. 19, &c. And will he not be as tender of his spiritual Israel, in the day of his redeeming and delivering them? Indeed the opposition will be very great, but consider who shall have the victory, see *Rev.* xvii. 14. Certainly it is true, and sealed by the Spirit of the Lord, that patience, meekness, innocency, love, righteousness, &c. shall at length overcome all unrighteousness, enmity, oppression, cruelty, wrath, &c. and that spirit from which they proceed; and as they are overcome, and when they are overcome, the Lamb's Spirit shall reign and shine in the glory of the Father. Oh! the sweet sense of this day, and further hope thereof; how doth it bear up the suffering lambs, in the midst of all their trials and tribulations!

Query 8. Hath not God created the waster to destroy? and hath not he power over him? And doth not he limit him in the midst of his destroying work? But did God create him to destroy his heritage? Or will God suffer him so to do? They may indeed destroy the buildings which are not of God; but God is the wise, great master-builder, who counted his cost before he began,

began, and knew he was able to maintain his building, against all the oppositions and opposers, which could rise up against it.

Query 9. Can any weapon formed against the covenant of life, and the children thereof, who are taught of God, and have peace from him, and who are established by him in righteousness; I say, can any weapon formed against these, prosper? Every tongue that riseth up in judgment against them, doth not the holy tongue condemn? Is not this the heritage of the servants of the Lord, in this our day? And doth not the Lord say (whatever men say to the contrary) that their righteousness is of him? Indeed, whoever receiveth the true righteousness, receiveth it from the hand of the Lord, and knoweth it to be of him.

And this testimony we have, even from the Spirit of the Lord, who taketh away our unrighteousness and filthy garments, and giveth us righteousness from and in his Son's righteousness, even the very same wherewith the Son himself was clothed. For as the seed is but one, and of one, *Heb. ii. 11.* so the righteousness is but one neither. Be not hasty in spirit, but wait to understand in the light and Spirit of the Lord, which is wisdom's place of giving true understanding to her disciples.

It is true, there hath been great darkness, and the true church hath been in the wilderness, and the remnant of her seed hunted and persecuted up and down the earth by the false church, which hath been cried up for the true. But, blessed be the Lord, the darkness is passing away, and the true light shining again; which light discovers and redeems out of all that is false, into that which is true; so that he that is truth, and no lye, is again known, and he speaketh truth and no lye, and he anointeth with the true and holy oil of life and salvation, all that are truly living. And now the kingdom of darkness is going down, and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ raising up and exalting; which is an inward kingdom, a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of life, a kingdom of peace, a kingdom of righteousness, a kingdom of holy power and dominion over sin and death in the heart. And this will spread and increase, to the blessing of persons, families, and nations (as they come to be sensible of, and subject to the holy light and power thereof), with the blessings of Abraham, wherewith all families and nations are to be blessed, as they come to be unleavened from the serpentine spirit and wisdom, and leavened with the innocency and righteousness of the Lamb's nature and Spirit.

The mighty God carry on his work, by the same mighty arm of strength wherewith he began it; and open the eyes of this nation, that they may see their proper hope and interest; for indeed the Lord hath great love to this nation, and blessing in store for it (for the seed's sake which he hath sown and caused to spring up in it); though many trials and tribulations must first be passed through, and the Spirit of enmity and opposition

against

against the appearance of God's Holy Spirit and power worn out. Oh! that men could come to that which gives the eye-sight, that thereby they might see a-right, and no longer take the rise of their seeing from that spirit and wisdom, which misrepresents things.

Written in Reading-Goal, in the tender love, true innocency, and uprightnes of my heart; which the Lord hath given me to suffer with for his Truth's sake; about the latter end of the 4th Month, 1671.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

7. AP 59

THE
HOLY TRUTH and PEOPLE
D E F E N D E D ;

And some of the

WEAPONS and STRENGTH
OF THE

POWER of DARKNESS, Broken and Scattered,

BY THE

LIGHT and POWER of TRUTH.

A N S W E R,

TO THE

**Chief Passages in a LETTER, written to me, and
replied to by me, before my Imprisonment in this
Place.**

**Where I have been a Prisoner, above a Year and a Half, without
any Law broken, or Cause given on my Part; who only came
Innocently and Peaceably to Visit my Friends in Prison.**

By me ISAAC PENINGTON,

**Prisoner for the TESTIMONY OF TRUTH (for could I have denied
TRUTH, I might have avoided the SNARE), at Reading-Goal.**

*The Bows of the Mighty are broken; and they that stumbled, are girt with
Strength, 1 SAM. ii. 4.*

THE
P R E A C E.



A LETTER was sent me from a dear friend of mine (bearing date the Fifth of the Eleventh Month, 1671.), who had long been greatly distressed, and could not find relief in the way of her former profession and church-fellowship; for whom I greatly travailed with the Lord, and towards whom my spirit was made very tender by him: I still felt the seal of God's love and mercy towards her, even in her lowest condition, deepest despair, and forest captivity, through her great and manifold temptations; and my testimony to her at times, from the Lord, on this behalf, was sometimes of use to her, to bear up her spirit, till the day of God's visiting and redeeming her, with the virtue and healing power of his salvation; which, blessed be his name, she hath since had sweet experience of, and true peace and joy in knowing the true head, holding him in the faith, and being held by him.

Now, this letter of an antient acquaintance of mine, which I had answered long ago, one that belonged to Sir Henry Vane (as she signified in her letter to me) desired she should see; which is said to be an answer to a letter of mine. If my answer had gone along with it, I should have took no further notice of it; but it going without my answer, lest it should do hurt to those to whom the Lord hath done or is doing good, I am engaged in spirit to reply somewhat to it, and to give forth to others what the Lord giveth in to me, upon this new occasion. How greatly, truly, and purely I have loved the man, I will not boast (the Lord knoweth, with whose knowledge herein I am content): but, oh! that this his paper might not be laid to his charge at the great day! which (I am afraid) it will, unless he repent of it; for, indeed, it is not a fruit of life from God's Holy Spirit; but of the growth of Egypt and Babylon.

It was sent me in the form of a book, as if it had been sent abroad for special service. There was no name at it, as if it were an arrow to fly in the

the dark, and wound secretly: but no weapon, formed against the Israel of God shall prosper, either from this hand, or any other; and every tongue that riseth up against them to judgment will God condemn. This is the heritage of the despised people and servants of the living God in this our day; whose righteousness is the righteousness of his Son bestowed upon them, wherewith he himself hath clothed them, as the anointed eye now seeth, and all eyes shall one day see, and tongues confess, to the glory of God the Father.

Vol. II.

T

THE

THE HOLY TRUTH and PEOPLE D E F E N D E D.

HE excepteth against those words of mine to him in a former letter (of Jan 24. which I have not here by me), That when his eyes are opened by the Lord, he shall then acknowledge that we oppose no truths of the Lord, but hold forth what we have received from him.

To which he thus replieth, *Is redemption by Christ's blood no truth of the Lord's?* Which he chargeth one of us in particular, and many others in general, with denying.

Answ. We are gathered into that, and abide in that, in which no truth can be denied; and are in him that leadeth into all truth, and teacheth to deny no truth, that ever was held forth by the Spirit of the Lord. Some of us may not yet be grown up in understanding into the mysteries of the kingdom, which God hath revealed and made manifest to others; but yet we do not deny, but own one another in our several measures of knowledge and sense of things, and in our several growths. And we own and acknowledge, in God's sight, the several dispensations he hath brought forth, both before the law, and under the law and prophets, and in the time of Christ's appearance in the flesh; and after, when he sent his Spirit, and all the time the church was in the wilderness, and now she is coming forth again, in the brightness and glory of the Father, looking fair as the morning, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners. Nor do we disown any thing that is of God in the professors of this age; but only that which we know, and are required by him to testify against, as being not of him. Oh! that they could weigh our words and testimony in a right Spirit! for they would not then be so offended at, and speak so against us, as now they do. And the Lord knoweth we would do any thing that lieth in us to remove the stumbling-blocks that lie before them; but it cannot be done to that spirit in them, before which God Almighty hath laid the stumbling-block, that it might stumble, and fall, and be snared, and broken, and taken. But if they could come into another Spirit, and feel unity with, and the birth of, another Spirit, the birth of that pure wisdom should find
stumbling-

stumbling-block or offence in this precious dispensation of truth, where-with God from on high hath visited us.

And as for denying *redemption by the blood of Christ*, oh! how will he answer this charge to God, when none upon the earth (as the Lord God knoweth) are so taught, and do so rightly and fully own redemption by the blood of Christ, as the Lord hath taught us to do! for we own the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, both outwardly and inwardly; both as it was shed on the cross, and as it is sprinkled in our consciences; and know the cleansing virtue thereof in the everlasting covenant, and in the light which is eternal; out of which light men have but a notion thereof, but do not truly know nor own it. And let him consider, before the time of anti-christ, it was a great matter to know and own Christ outwardly, as he appeared in that body; but since the antichristian spirit hath got that, the distinguishing knowledge and owning of Christ is, to know and own him inwardly. The outward knowledge and confession now (as it is generally separated from, and held forth in way of distinction from the inward) is but the knowledge and confession of Babylon, and not the true living knowledge and confession of Christ, in and by the Spirit of the Father, which is the knowledge and confession of all the children of the true and heavenly mother, which is the mother of all that are born of the Spirit.

He repeateth those words of mine, *That we do not make any finite thing our righteousness; but Christ of God is made unto us righteousness.* This, he saith, is well spoken, and wisheth we may always abide in this confession.

Ans. These words arose in me from an inward feeling of him who giveth righteousness, and of the righteousness given; and the Lord preserving me in that life, I shall feel so for ever, and confess so for ever. And truly I can testify of no other righteousness; for, blessed be the name of my God, I feel the righteousness of his Son revealed in me daily, from faith to faith. In his name I have been gathered, in his name I live, and in him I feel righteousness; and indeed there is nothing but righteousness, holiness, truth, life, and salvation (and the like) in him.

And he that is truly in him, is righteous and holy in him; there being in him a new creating of all that are there, and a renewing into the holy and heavenly image, which consists in the righteousness and holiness of truth.

He desireth me to give a plain answer to this question:

Is Christ of God made our righteousness by faith in his blood, or in his Spirit?

Ans. A pretended faith in Christ's blood, without faith in his Spirit, is but dead and notional. *Except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood* (saith Christ) *ye have no life in you.* *It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh* (saith he) *profiteth nothing.* Now the faith must be in that which quickeneth, and the faith in that which quickeneth is holy and righteous, and the man who is found in it is justified, through that faith in the quickening power,

in the sight of God. Thus Abraham was justified in the sight of God; and thus are the children of Abraham to be justified, even through believing in that holy power and Spirit which requireth obedience, and justifieth the obedient, and condemneth the disobedient for ever, *Rom. iv. 24.*

He saith, *He fears a snake in this green grass, when I say, From his life, virtue, and power revealed in us, is our conformity to him.*

Ans. It were better and safer for him to fear at home; for the snake is in his own grass, and many notional, high, soaring expressions, without true knowledge. But can there be any conformity to Christ without his life, virtue, and power inwardly revealed? What else can conform unto, and bring forth in, the image and likeness of Christ?

He saith, *He feareth lest I make this life and virtue our righteousness, which is indeed the fruits of it.*

Ans. Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge, and runneth out from the truth into his own imaginations? What was Christ's righteousness? Was it not the life, the virtue, the Spirit of the Father in him, he being one with it, in the faith of it, and in the obedience to it? And is not the righteousness of the head and the body the same, communicated from the head to the body? Are they not all of one, and the righteousness one and the same in both? So much of Christ's Spirit, so much of his righteousness; and out of his Spirit, out of his righteousness for evermore. For the righteousness of the Son is revealed, and communicated from faith to faith, in his Spirit; and so Christ is indeed made righteousness to them that are found in his Spirit; and they are covered with the garment of righteousness and salvation, who are covered with his Spirit.

He saith, *Our righteousness is before this.*

Ans. What! Is our righteousness before any of the life, virtue, and power of Christ revealed in us? Is God a respecter of persons? Doth he justify any out of the holy covenant before he hath made a change in him? How doth this man, with his vain imaginations, turn the whole way and counsel of God upside-down?

He brings a scripture to prove this, *The spirit is life for righteousness sake.*

Ans. That scripture (which is *Rom. viii. 10.*) speaks of those in whom Christ is and dwells; and there indeed *the body is dead because of sin, and the spirit is life because of righteousness.* This is plainly spoken, and plainly felt and known as it is spoken. Oh! that he had the true sense and understanding of it as it is in Jesus!

He saith, *Righteousness is in order of nature before sanctification.*

Ans. That which is holy is righteous; there is nothing righteous in the eyes of the pure God but that which is holy. The head was really holy and righteous, and they that are in him partake of his holiness and righteousness, and are really holy and righteous in him; and faith, which purifies the

the heart, and through which sanctification is, must needs be in order of nature before the justification which is by it; for God justifieth no unbelievers, but believers only. Yea, the wicked must forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn unto the Lord; which cannot possibly be without some degree of sanctification, before the Lord will have mercy, and pardon the soul its sins, *Isa. lv. 7. and chap. i. 16, 17, 18.*

He saith, *Justification is an act of grace passed upon us by God freely, without respect to us as godly; nay, properly reflecting on us in that moment as ungodly.*

Ans. I charge this in the sight of God for absolutely false doctrine, and contrary to the gospel. For God justifieth no man as ungodly; but calleth upon men to repent, and turn from their ungodliness, and he will have mercy upon them, justify and save them. Now men are not ungodly in turning from their ungodliness, but changed; and so their state is in some measure changed before justified. If Abraham was ungodly when God called him; yet in forsaking his own country, and following the Lord, and offering up his Son, he was obedient, and not ungodly, and in that obedience he was justified. A man may have notions of justification in his mind, and accordingly take himself to be justified, when he is not; but there is no man justified by the Lord till he be changed, translated into him in whom God justifieth, out of the place of condemnation into the place of justification. For till men are changed by the Spirit and power of the Lord, they are but darkness, and in the darkness, where no justification is. It is the believing, the obedient, the children of light, that are justified by the Lord.

He saith, *Were we godly before or at that time, it were no act of grace to pronounce us righteous.*

Ans. He that witnesseth salvation in Christ Jesus, witnesseth it to be a continued act of grace. Grace appears to the soul, grace teacheth, grace enableth, grace maketh a change from the ungraciousness of the heart and state; and then grace (or God by his grace in and through Jesus Christ) forgiveth the sins that were committed before. For though the Lord visit me with life, quicken me thereby, make a change in my heart and state; yet it is his mercy to accept me, and to pass by for his name's sake my former debts and trespasses against him. Alas! the new covenant is wholly a covenant of grace and mercy; and the giving of Christ, drawing the mind to him, accepting and justifying in him, are works of grace and mercy towards his. So the spiritual Israel may well sing this song in the land of holiness and redemption, *O praise the Lord! for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever.* I can truly set my seal to this thing; that the more holy and righteous the Lord maketh me in his Son, the more sensible am I of his love, grace, and mercy, in justifying of me; and it is precious to me to witness justification and acceptance with him in and through his Son.

He

He saith further, *But this is the bounty, the freeness, the munificence, the riches of the grace of God, to call things that are not as though they were.*

Ans. Take heed of abusing that scripture. God sent Christ to renew, to redeem, to change, to make holy and righteous, to make people such as the Father might be pleased with, accept, and justify; and as Christ maketh them so, the Father receiveth and accepteth them as such. But God doth distinguish and call things as they are. He doth not call an ungodly man an holy man, a justified man; but when he hath changed him, new-created him in Christ Jesus, took him out of his old stock, and planted him into the new; then he accounteth and calleth him so, and not before. It were better for men to wait upon God to understand what his Spirit meant in what he spake, than to put forced meanings of their own upon his words.

He wrests my words, charging and reproofing me, as if I said, *The love of God was a bare thing.*

Ans. Those were not my words, nor did my words so signify; but my words were, That it is not by bare loving (or mere loving, or only loving) that God makes a man righteous; which is very true and manifest: for there is, besides his love (in and through that love) the sending of his Son, and revealing of his Son, drawing to and transplanting into his Son, to make holy and righteous in him. For holiness, though it may be distinguished, yet it cannot be divided from righteousness; nor can a man possibly be righteous in God's sight, unless he be also holy in some measure. His reflecting words hereupon I pass by, though very unjustly and unchristianly cast upon me (without any just occasion given him by words) which I desire the Lord may make him sensible of, that he may be forgiven it.

He blameth me for saying, *We make no finite thing our righteousness; and yet he saith, We make the measure of the Spirit (which each member of Christ receives) our righteousness.*

Ans. A measure hath the same nature with the fulness. A measure of the Spirit and life, of the grace and truth which comes from Jesus Christ, hath the same nature that the fulness hath. All the life, all the new creation that comes from him, and dwells in him, is righteous, and found righteous where-ever it is found. Yet I do not remember that we have thus expressed it, that that measure is our righteousness; but it is he who is the fulness, who is revealed in that measure; and it is he who is our righteousness, our wisdom, our sanctification, our redemption; but it is in the holy pure measure of the heavenly gift that he is made thus of God to us, not out of it.

He saith, *The Lord our righteousness redeems us, not properly by the life and Spirit of his Godhead; though that was in the work, supporting, enabling him, and carrying him up, in that great undertaking; but by the death and sufferings of his manhood.*

Ans.

Answ. This is strange doctrine, to make the manhood the main Redeemer, and the life and Spirit of the Godhead but the supporter and carrier up of the man in the work of redemption; whereas it was the Word which created all, which also redeemed; he that left his glory, and made himself of no reputation, but came in the form of a servant, to do the will. It was the Spirit and life of the Father (even the eternal Son) which took up that body, appeared in that body, offered it up a pure and acceptable sacrifice to the Father, finishing the work therein which the Father gave him to do, *John xvii. 4, 5.*

He saith, *Shall we think to answer the law by our obedience?*

Answ. We do not look upon the law of Moses, which was given to the Jew outward, to be the dispensation of the new covenant, or to be the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; but those who are in the new covenant, and have God's law written in their hearts, and his fear put there, which preserveth from departing from him, and his Spirit put within them, to cause them to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and do them; and who live in the Spirit, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in these. Yet they do not magnify and cry up their own obedience (nor call it their righteousness) but him from whom their obedience comes. For in the measure of his grace and living truth the soul is one with him; and all that he is, and all that he hath done, is theirs; and it is he himself that is the righteousness of all that are in him: and they that abide in him partake of his righteousness from day to day, which floweth in like a stream upon them.

I wish he could consider in what spirit it is that he calls the white stone a ticket for the righteousness. Doth he know the white stone with the new name? It is no less than the foundation-stone, than the righteousness itself; and what doth he talk of bringing that as a ticket for the righteousness?

He seemeth to pass by some things (which I speak in tender love and weightiness of spirit to him) as the judgment of man in his day; but let him take heed, when he comes to appear before God, he then find it was the judgment of God's Spirit in the light of his day; which day is inward and spiritual, which believers are to hasten to, and which approacheth in every heart, as the night spendeth and passeth away. And all true Christians and believers ought to wait for the passing away of the night, and the dawning of this day, and the arising of the day-star in their hearts.

He saith, *Christ is now ready to be revealed.*

Answ. I believe he is to be revealed further, and in fuller glory; but he is truly already revealed as the Saviour, shepherd, and bishop of the soul; and many are gathered home to their resting-place in him, which, while they were scattered up and down upon the barren mountains (before the shepherd appeared and made himself manifest) they could not find.

He

He seems to strike at the peace and joy which is of God, and to give it a dash, *Because minds estranged from the enlightnings and convictions of God, have much peace in their ways, and such are under delusions.*

Answ. We do not tell men of the peace and joy we have in our God boastingly; but in a faithful way of testimony concerning, and invitation to, what we once wanted, but now have found, under the leadings of the true Shepherd. And the peace and joy which he gives, is an evidence and assurance in the hearts of those to whom it is given by him. And they that have been greatly distressed for want of the Lord, and his powerful arm of salvation, having met with it, it riseth up from life in them to testify and say to others, *Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.* And oh! that ye also were stripped of this dead, notional, comprehensive knowledge concerning the Saviour! That ye might meet with the Saviour himself, and receive that knowledge from him which is life eternal. And this, with the true peace and joy thereof from him, ye would find no delusion.

He speaketh, *Of suffering loss, and of phrases and expressions: Better (said he) to suffer loss in these, than themselves to be destroyed.*

Answ. Let him apply this home. Oh! that he saw how those phrases and expressions, and imaginary knowledge, which he hath brought forth in this letter, stands in his way to hinder the true knowledge; and that he cannot possibly receive the true knowledge without being emptied of these, and parting with them for the excellency of the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and without the true knowledge of Jesus men cannot but perish, and be overtaken with destruction.

Then for being helpful to establish persons in grace.

Answ. Such kind of doctrines as these do not tend thereto.

They may establish men in such a notion of grace as he hath formed; but they neither tend to lead to, nor establish in, the grace itself, but keep men from it. Nay, I can truly say it from him that is true, that he himself cannot receive the grace, the thing itself, till he part with these notions. And oh! that he might know the stone cut out of the mountain without hands to dash his image! that the Living One (who gives life) might be received by him, in that measure of grace and truth which he inwardly dispenses to all that travel out of the darkness of their own imaginations and conceivings upon the scriptures into his pure light.

The main reason he giveth why he is not satisfied with that which I sent him, concerning the sum and substance of the true religion, is; because it fights with his notions, even a stating of our righteousness with God, according to his imagination; which is absolutely a meer dream, which he hath dreamt of in the night, and not seen in the light of the day. For the cry of the Spirit of the Lord is in the gospel-day; *Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in.* This is the truth, as God hath revealed by his own Spirit, in this our day; but to say this speaks
of

of our state in him, without witnessing it in ourselves, is but a meer dream; and men cannot bring forth fruit to God, nor be lovely and pleasing in his eyes, but as their fallow ground is ploughed up, the thorns, thistles, briars, and that which is unclean and unholy, removed.

Christ, he saith, *is the heavenly man, and mansion in whom we are thus blessed, and in whom we sit down in a state of rest and reconciliation, heavenly and divine, before and without the consideration of any works of righteousness which we have wrought, &c.*

Answ. If he means this concerning the full sitting down in rest, it is directly contrary to scripture. For none sit down in that full rest, before and without consideration of works of righteousness wrought by them. For that great judgment is a time of rendering to every man according to his works. Rest is the reward of the traveller, and his travels are not despised, but considered in his reward. Mark; every one that improved the talent, had a reward from his Lord. *And come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c. Matt. xxv.* And the apostle is of the same mind with Christ, when he saith, *It is a righteous thing with God, to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you rest, &c. 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.* So that persons do not sit down in eternal blessedness in Christ, before or without consideration of any works wrought by them.

And then for sitting down in an heavenly divine state of righteousness, rest, and peace in him here; it is a glorious state to be travelled to. There must be a translating out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the dear Son first. The kingdom must first be come, and the soul prepared to enter into it, at the gate which the Spirit opens to him in the way of the gospel. For it is one thing to know somewhat of Christ, and to begin to become a disciple; and another thing to learn of him so to deny a man's own wisdom and will, as to come to receive and be born of that which is true and living of him; and to learn to wait aright for the opening of the gate, and entering into the kingdom and land of life, and to be prepared to sit down with him.

For there is a state of discipleship, wherein a man hardly knoweth a settlement, so much as how to watch with Christ rightly and constantly; but it is a great matter to be able to dwell and abide with him. None can do this, *but he that can dwell with devouring fire and everlasting burnings:* for the pure word of life is a fire, and he that sits down in the heavenly place in him, must sit down in that fire.

This he reckons the firm stable state, which indeed is no state at all. There is not a state in Christ without being in Christ; and then the state is according to the soul's being in Christ: for then the work of regeneration, the work of sanctification, the work of justifying, &c. goeth on; and a man is with God, according as he is framed and new created in Christ, and not otherwise. So that the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ is found

judging and condemning whatever is not of God; and justifying only what is of God in him. For the soul then comes into the new covenant, which requireth and justifieth that which is new, all that is wrought in God; and condemneth all that is wrought out of him. And so here is the true sense and knowledge of sin, by the new and pure law of the new covenant; and the advocate known, and repentance given by him upon all occasions, to those that wait upon him, and the sprinkling of the blood, and the remission upon repentance. This is the new living way of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he hath consecrated for all his (made known in the demonstration of his Spirit) which will stand for ever; whereas mens apprehensions about those things, which they have gathered and comprehended of themselves out of the scriptures (in the supposed light of their natural reason and understanding) are but dreams, and will vanish even in their own hearts, if ever the true light arise there.

He saith, *This state can never fall, nor be finally fallen from.*

Answ. There is a way of coming to Christ, and there is a way of preservation in Christ. For there is a power that redeems; and men are preserved by that power in subjection to it. And so every one, *that thinketh he standeth, is to fear, and to take heed lest he fall*; and not to boast and say, *I am in a state of justification, which is firm and cannot be moved*; and it cannot fall, nor be finally fallen from. *For ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. Keep to the power which preserves, hold that fast which thou hast, let no man take thy crown.* Keep the faith, make not shipwreck of it, and of a good conscience. Oh! that men knew the right doctrine and way of coming to Christ! which they cannot do, till they are taught of the Father, *John vi. 45.* and the right doctrine and way of standing and abiding in him. For truly mens professed coming to Christ, believing and standing at this day, is generally notional, outward, without; but not in the inward life and power itself, without which no man can come to him, nor stand nor abide in him.

He chargeth us, *With setting up a covenant of works; always doing and never done; a covenant to be performed by us, for ourselves; not by Christ for us.*

Answ. I would he saw in the true light how unjust and untrue this charge is. For the Lord God of life knoweth that he himself hath taught us the new covenant, and thereby taught us to wait upon himself in his Son, to work all our works in us and for us; and this we daily experience, that we can work nothing, but as he works in us. Therefore our whole course is a waiting on him in stillness, to witness him appearing and doing all in us; and blessed be his name, we do not wait in vain. But if he think all works are excluded out of the new covenant, he greatly erreth; for the works of God's Spirit are required and have a place therein; and God and Christ (the King and Shepherd) is the judge of his people in the new covenant, and justifieth or condemneth according to the law thereof.

In

In the faith and obedience he justifieth; in the unbelief and disobedience he condemns, without respect of persons.

And it is a precious thing in the gospel ministration to come to God the judge of all, and to witness true judgment set up by God in a man's own heart; that by the ministration of the pure judgment there, the soul may come to learn righteousness, of the holy teacher and Shepherd, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who is just and faithful under his Father, in the impartial ministration of the new covenant.

Hereupon several charges he brings against us, through his own mistakes and misapprehensions of us.

As, First, *That our doctrine implies free will and power in the creature.*

Answ. We have never experienced free will nor power, as of ourselves, but as we have been turned to God's power, and received it from him; nor did we ever testify to others, that they could receive and embrace truth in their own will, and by their own power. Oh! that this person had true discerning of, and were severed from, that spirit which thus chargeth us! For whoever receives this testimony concerning the inward light of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall never find himself able to do any thing therein by his own will and power; but there witnesseth God's begetting him out of his own will, by the life and power of truth.

Secondly, He chargeth it, *That it maketh the election of God altogether frustraneous.*

Answ. Election of the seed, in the seed, it doth not at all make frustraneous; but mens wrong apprehensions concerning election out of the seed, the true doctrine of election doth not consist with. *He hath chosen us in him. So that in him, to wit, in Christ, the choice is;* and he that will make his election sure, must make the seed sure to him; growing in the nature thereof, wherein the election is to the truly obedient.

He saith, *Our righteousness with God is the foundation.*

Answ. But is there not somewhat, which is the foundation of our righteousness with God? And can we be righteous with God, till we come to that foundation, and be made righteous by it? Must we not first believe in him? And is not faith a gift which comes from the holy root, and maketh a change in them in whom this gift is found? Doth not faith make a difference between them that believe, and *them that believe not*? So that, so soon as ever there is true faith, and it thus works, the *state is changed*; and there is no justification before faith. For in the unbelief is the condemnation for ever. *He that believeth not, is condemned already.* And what! is he justified there too, at the same time? Was Abraham, our father, justified in the unbelief and disobedience? Or in believing and obeying God? For what saith the scripture? *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.*

That which I spoke of, he saith, *Is but the fruit and superstructure.*

Ans. When Christ directs men to the seed of the kingdom, doth he direct unto the fruit and superstructure? I spoke there of the seed, of the light, of the holy Spirit, of the quickening virtue; is that the superstructure? Or is that the fruit of mens being made righteous? Nay; must they not turn to that, receive that, believe in that, even in the light of God's Spirit (for they are the true and right believers), before a man can come to be made righteous, or accounted righteous in the eyes of the Lord? For none are righteous, but in him; and all are out of him, till they be gathered into him.

He instanteth in one passage of mine (in a book intituled, "*The Sum or Substance of our Religion, who are called QUAKERS,*"), the words are these: *This is the sum of all, even to know and experience what is to be brought down into death, and kept in death; what to be brought up out of the grave, to live to God, and reign in his dominion; and what to be kept in subjection and obedience to him, who is to reign. Now, to experience it thus done in the heart, the flesh brought down, the seed of life raised, and the soul subject to the pure heavenly power, whose right it is to reign in the heart, in and by the seed, this is a blessed state indeed; for here the work is done, &c.* These were my words.

Now mind; God is the teacher in the new covenant. Now he that hath learned this of him, hath he not learned the true religion? And is not this a full sum and substance of religion? When the apostle saith, *Pure religion, and undefiled before God, is to visit the fatherless, &c.* Alas! might this spirit have said against the blessed apostle, that is not the pure religion (not the sum or substance of pure and undefiled religion), that is but a fruit or superstructure! Oh! that men had true sense and understanding! That they might savour the words that come from God's Spirit, and the words that come from their own spirit; and might not be offended at that which is true, pure, and living of him.

But having disliked this sum, he giveth one of his own, in these words following: *I say, the sum, and that which first and mainly imports us to know, as the Lord hath taught me, is; That the old man is crucified with Christ, and brought down into his grave, and that we are risen together with him, by the faith of the operation of God; and from this faith to be working with God; to mortify our members that are on the earth.*

Ans. Doth not Christ send his apostles to preach the gospel, and give them this message, *That God is light*; and to turn their minds to the true light, that they might be enlightened by it? Doth it not import men first to know that, whereby they might be crucified, before they can know themselves crucified thereby? So that Christ did judge this as the first thing necessary to be known in the preaching of the gospel; and bid men preach the light, and turn men to the light, and to the inward appearance and voice of God's word in their hearts. And what! are men risen together with him, by the faith of the operation of God, while they are yet in their
sins,

sins, in their ungodly state? And how can any witness the faith of the operation of God in this state? Now it had been better he had forborne affirming, that the Lord taught him thus; for truly the Lord never taught any thus. This is not truth from God, nor will it be owned by the Lord as his truth, when he comes to appear before him; and he should have took it to himself, and not have put the name of the Lord to it.

But against this his own doctrine, he raiseth an objection in these words; *Shall we mortify that which is mortified already?*

His answer is; *The old man, which is crucified together with Christ, is the state of the flesh, and of enmity. This is past away, and in this is the concern of our righteousness, and justification properly.*

That which remains to be mortified, are our members upon earth, which are the fruits of that evil state; and in the mortifying of these, is the concern of our sanctification. The will of God is done in heaven, &c.

Answ. Paul speaks of the law of sin in his members; and he also speaks of the body of death, and cries out against that; *Oh! wretched man that I am, saith he, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* He felt somewhat that nourished and gave strength to the law of sin in his members, and looked upon himself as wretched, till he could meet with deliverance therefrom. Now some are of opinion that there is no being delivered from the body of sin, while in this life. Dost thou look upon it to be done in Christ, for us, without us; but never to be done by Christ in us? Let me tell thee, if ever thou come to witness the pure eternal light of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in thee; that will not find out some members on earth only, but the very body thereof; and shew thee the necessity of the putting off that body from thee, and that circumcision whereby it is to be done, which is the circumcision of Christ. Mark the promise of the new-covenant, *I will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, that thou mayest live.* Is not this the circumcision of Christ? Doth not this cut off the body of the sins of the flesh, in the particular, where this is witnessed? This is the truth, as it is in Jesus, even to put off the old man with his deeds. It doth not say, *The body is put off in Christ without us*, and men must only put off the members or deeds; but, *they must put off the body*, and come to witness in themselves the very nature, spirit, root, and principle from whence they proceed, cut down and destroyed in them. They must feel the axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and it cut down in them (not think it enough to say, it is done in Christ for them); yea, they must also witness the Lord arising to shake terribly the earth, in which the tree grew; that so the place of dragons and serpents (where each lay in times past) may henceforward become the place of holiness; where grass may grow, and the new plants and flowers of the paradise of God.

And how is the will of God done in heaven? Is it done in heaven after this manner? Have mercy and righteousness the preheminance, the leading of the van? (they are his own words) and said to go before, and look down.

down from heaven after this manner (the body of sin being put off in Christ there)? Are there not those here on earth, who dwell in heaven? whose conversation is in heaven; even the witnesses to God's holy truth who are ascended up above the spirit of this world, and dwell in God's holy Spirit; and who walk in the light, as God is in the light. Hell is not far from the wicked; nor is heaven far from them who are renewed in the spirits of their minds, and who witness the passing away of the old things, and the new creation in Christ. Oh! that he could look back (in a true sense) and see how he hath wrested those scriptures! *Psal. lxxxv. 9, 10, 11. Isa. iv. 2. and Ephes. ii. 6.* after his own imaginations: and, indeed, in this spirit, men cannot but turn the precious truth of God into a lie; that is, as to themselves, as to their own knowledge of it. It is known how the branch of the Lord is beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth excellent and comely, and in what day it is so; which day is, *When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Sion, and shall have purged the blood, &c. by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, Isa. iv. 4. Then every one that is left shall be called holy, and the branch of the Lord shall be glorious in the midst of them, and the fruits of the earth excellent and comely for them. And then they that are thus purged, shall sit with Christ in the heavenly places; there being an abundant entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom, 2 Peter i. 11.*

Thirdly, *He chargeth it with making the obedience and suffering of Christ superfluous, except only as a pattern.*

Ans. Christ came to do the Father's will; to obey, to suffer, to taste death for every man; to fight with and overcome the Devil; to offer an holy, spotless sacrifice for all mankind, that through him they might witness atonement and acceptance. And the Lord saw the use of this, and we witness the use of this, and find every thing in its proper place and service in him, who is God's covenant of life and peace in us, and to us. But the work of this day is not to preach up a notional knowledge of these things (the Christian world, so called, hath been drowned and dead in them long enough), but to bring to that measure of the Spirit, to that sense of *grace and truth, which is come by Jesus Christ*; wherein the benefit of these things is truly reaped and enjoyed; and, indeed, that is the work committed unto us from the Lord, who gave us this testimony to bear, whatever men may think or speak of us.

And whereas he speaks of our laying bold of passages, in his printed sermons, to favour our cause:

Ans. That is his mistake as to me; it was for his sake I mentioned it. There was indeed, at that time, somewhat stirring in him, which would have gathered him, had he known and obeyed its voice, and not run out into lofty notions concerning it. He had some sense then of a glory approaching, which he might have from the true prophet; though even then

he

ran out in his imaginations concerning it, and did not rightly apprehend, nor know how and when it appeared.

He hath further charges against us; *Of crying up works against the workman; man's grace and righteousness against God's; conformity to Christ against Christ; yea, to make a Christ of our righteousness, a Saviour of our conformity.*

Ans. Oh! what will this man do, when the Lord shall shew unto him that he hath charged not so much us, as the Spirit and power, and precious appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, with these things! We cry up works no otherwise than we are taught of God, and as the apostles and prophets have cried them up. Faith is necessary, and works are necessary in their places; and the justification of each follows them. And he that receiveth the Spirit of the Son, and therein doth righteousness, is therein esteemed of God righteous, *as the Son is righteous*, 1 John iii. 7. God justifieth us in his Son, and loveth his holy seed too therein, and the faith that comes from him, and all the works that are wrought in him, and out of this holy root of life and power is no man, nor his faith, nor his works justified.

Then for man's grace and righteousness. Where doth he hear us speak of man's grace? Oh! what doth he mean! Will he misrepresent the cause of his neighbour or brother, to make it bad? And for man's righteousness, we do not cry it up or put it on, but testify men must be unclothed of it; and we ourselves were fain to part with it, and put it off, before we could be clothed with God's righteousness. But the works of life, the works of God's Spirit, the works of the new creature, the works of the new covenant; these are not man's works, nor unrighteous works, condemned by God; but justified in and through him that works them. The works wrought in us are truly acceptable, and we in *him who works them*, who is our righteousness. And concerning this people (these children of the new covenant) which the Lord hath begotten and brought forth in this our day, that scripture is fulfilled in them, and upon them: *Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord*, Isai. liv. 17. Well! as long as the Lord saith so, we matter not though others say, *that our righteousness is of ourselves*, and that it is our own righteousness; being assured that God's testimony in our hearts (as to this thing) will stand.

He aggravateth this charge thus: *And this to be done by those that have been so far enlightened, and that account all the religion and profession in the world below them as carnal.*

Ans. Indeed we magnify truth, life, the anointing, the spiritual the inward appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, to which we have been turned, and in it made spiritual; and all other knowledge, faith, profession, religion (which hath not its rise here) we cannot but call carnal. For the enlightening Spirit of the Lord hath given us this testimony to bear, against all the dead notional professors of this age, who build from the letter (or rather their apprehensions of the letter) out of the life; all which cry up names of the foundation and corner-stone; but refuse, reject, deny, and turn

turn from the corner-stone himself, and have neither skill nor patience to try what he is, in this his pure, precious, living, powerful, and glorious appearance in the spiritual light of his inward day, after the long thick darkness of the foregoing night. And woe would be unto us, if we did not thus testify! For for this cause we were born and brought into the world, to testify to the present appearance of our God, and of his Christ, in this our day. Glory to him who hath called and chosen us to, and (in a true and precious measure and degree of his own pure life) made us faithful therein.

This (saith he) is so far from giving us a lift nearer heaven, that I cannot more properly resemble it than to the coming forth of Amaleck, who met Israel by the way when they were come forth out of Egypt, and smote the hindmost of them, &c.

Ans. Do not talk of having a lift nearer heaven. Oh! learn the way, the holy way, the living way, wherein no dead, unclean thing can walk. Learn to know God's Spirit in yourselves from that which opposeth his Spirit. Ye have been long learning, after your old conceivings and apprehensions of the letter; oh! at length come to learn the truth as it is in Jesus, which discovers sin and death, and the body of it, and crucifies and puts it off, and makes room in the heart for him that is true and pure.

And then for Amaleck's smiting Israel, Oh! how greatly are ye mistaken! Ye take yourselves for Israel, and us for Amaleck; whereas, if your eyes were anointed, ye would see that we have been begotten and born of God's Spirit, through the Word of life, which was from the beginning, wherein we have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, that we might worship God in his own pure Spirit, and in his living truth; and that our God hath inwardly appeared to us, and led us out of Egypt's land, and out of Babylon also, and all the lands whereinto we have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day: and that this is Amaleck's spirit in your several sorts of professors (through your dark imaginations and conceivings about the letter) which riseth up against us; and this spirit in you feareth not that God who hath appeared, and by his own holy arm of power hath led, and is leading us. So that we may take up the complaint of the prophet in this day, *Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* For though we speak what we have heard, seen, and felt of the life which is eternal, and of the *Word which was in the beginning*; yet ye are so far from the witness of God in your own hearts that ye cannot receive our testimony, but oppose it with your dead, dry, notional, conceited, imaginary knowledge, which will stand you in no stead at all when ye come to appear before God.

Then he proceedeth, complaining against us thus: *Ah, Sir! instead of clapping as on the back, and ministering to us in our journey, you clog our march, and fall upon our rear. Instead of serving the kingdom of Christ, which the church is now in travail of, you deny the first principles of the gospel, and wholly*

wholly disown the hope of Christ's second appearing and kingdom; knowing or acknowledging, as no other Saviour, so no other kingdom, but a principle or a light in yourselves.

Ans. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; and this is the message of the gospel, 1 John i. 5.

And Christ, who is one with the Father, he is one and the same light with him; and we confess we look not for another besides him, nor for another kingdom besides the kingdom which is revealed in him; for the kingdom which is revealed and manifested in and by him, is the spiritual, eternal, everlasting kingdom, and there is not another. We do not say the fullness, or that the full glory of the kingdom, is now revealed or enjoyed (nay, we confess we have but the earnest, in comparison, but a measure, a proportion); but this is the same in nature and kind with the fullness itself. And all that is of Christ, of his Spirit, of his nature, is saving; the least measure of his grace that appeareth in any heart bringeth salvation with it; the least touch of his finger hath pure life and saving virtue in it; yet this is not distinct nor separate from the fullness, and so it is not another, though it be not the fullness.

But whereas thou complaineest of our not ministering to you in your journey, but clogging it: Oh! that you knew what your journey is, and whither ye are marching and travelling in that present spirit wherein ye act! We acknowledge it God's great love and mercy to us, to deliver us from that spirit, and from that way of knowledge, religion, and worship wherein ye still abide. And what we have seen and known from the Lord, that are we required of him to testify to you; and if your eyes were opened (by the principle of light from him) in the holy anointing, ye would bow to the testimony; but judging of it in a contrary wisdom and spirit, ye not only turn from it, but fight against it; and reproach and slander us for our faithfulness to the Lord, and good-will to you; which the Lord make you sensible of, and forgive you, that at length ye may know and receive him (who is the desire of all nations) in his pure, living, inward, and spiritual appearance.

And as for denying the first principles; that belongs to yourselves; for do ye not deny that light which is the foundation of all, and wherein and whereby all the mysteries of God's kingdom are seen; and instead thereof, set up a notional comprehensive knowledge of your own conceiving, comprehending, and gathering from the letter; whereas no man can understand the letter but as he comes into and abides in the light? This we have experienced in ourselves formerly; for we were but guessing at and imagining concerning the letter, until we were turned to, and our minds gathered into, and comprehended in, the light of God's Spirit.

And as for disowning the hope of Christ's kingdom, the Lord knoweth that is far from us; for we ourselves bless him for what of his kingdom is already

ready appeared, and wait and hope for the further and fuller appearance thereof. But this we confess, another Spirit, another Christ, another light, another life, another power, another kingdom, besides him who hath already appeared, we do not expect: for he is our king and kingdom both; and the least proportion of his life and Spirit received (bought with the loss of all, and so purchased and possessed) is no less than a pearl of great price, and an heavenly kingdom to him that enjoyeth it.

He addeth further: *If Christ be but a principle, then we are no other; and only principles shall be saved, and no persons: Is this your gospel?*

Answ. Christ is the promised seed, to which all the promises are, in which seed all the families of the earth are blessed, as they are gathered unto, and grafted into, him. But he is not only the seed, but the seedsmen also; who soweth of his life, of his nature, of his Spirit, of his heavenly image, in the hearts of the children of men. He giveth a measure of the grace and truth unto them, the fullness whereof he hath received of his Father. Now this measure of the light eternal is very precious, and is that wherein he appears and manifests himself. Yea, indeed, glorious things are both spoken and witnessed of the seed of life, of the seed of the kingdom, of the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ; but we never said that this seed or measure of life is the fullness itself, but that which the fullness imparts to us, and brings salvation home to our doors by. And if any man will receive Christ, he must receive that from Christ wherein he manifests himself. There is a difference between the light which enlighteneth (the fullness of light, which giveth the measure of light, the measure of anointing to us) and the measure or proportion which is given; the one is Christ himself, the other is his gift; yet his gift is of the same nature with himself, and leavens those that receive it, and abide in it, into the same nature: so that not only the gift is one with him, but we also are one with him in the gift. Come, be not thus wise after the flesh, nor do not strive so (in thy wisdom and knowledge out of the truth) to triumph over the truth, and truth's testimony, in this the day of God's great love, and glorious arm of salvation, revealed in the midst of his people, which he hath gathered out of Babylon, and the dark knowledge thereof, into the light and kingdom of his own dear Son; where he giveth them eternal life, and of the fruits of the good and heavenly land.

He addeth: *I firmly believe, and so have all the saints that have gone before, that Christ is a person, and his Spirit is a living principle in the hearts of all the faithful; but it is not the Spirit or principle in us that did redeem us, but the man Christ Jesus.*

Answ. If he mean by the man Christ Jesus, the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, the heavenly man, the Lord from heaven, he who is One with the Father, the Word which was in the beginning, which created all things, I grant him to be the Redeemer; for it was he who laid down his glory, wherewith he was glorified before the world was, and made himself of no reputation, but

took

took upon him the form of a servant, and came as a servant, in the fashion of a man, to do the will. But if he distinguish Christ from this Word and Spirit, and make the man's nature the Saviour, and the Godhead only assistant to him (as he seemed to word it before, and as these his words seem to imply), that I utterly deny. For so testifieth the scripture, *I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour. I am a just God, and a Saviour, &c.* So that Christ is the Saviour, as he is one with God. It was God's arm and power (revealed in him) that effects salvation. Yea, if I may so speak, his obedience was of value, as it came from the Spirit, and it was the offering it up through the eternal Spirit that made it so acceptable to God. So that we must not attribute redemption originally to him as a man, but as he came from God; and bring the honour all back to the spring and fountain from whence he had all, that God may be all in all, and the very kingdom of Christ may endure and abide for ever, in the root of life from whence it came.

And so he is not a foundation or the corner-stone distinct from God. He, as the foundation, was and is the rock of ages, the spiritual rock, both before and since he took upon him the body prepared for him. It is the Spirit, the life which was revealed in that man (by which he did his Father's will) which was and is the foundation whereupon all the living stones are built. There is a foundation of death, and that is the wicked spirit; there is a foundation of life, and that is the Holy Spirit, by which Christ himself was led and guided (in that his appearance in the flesh), which descended upon him, and he was anointed with, and all his are to be anointed with, and live in, the same Spirit. And he that knows Christ in this Spirit, he hath the true and abiding knowledge of him, and no otherwise. And though the names *Messiah, Jesus, Christ, Saviour, Anointed, &c.* were given to him as in the flesh, or as man, they most properly and originally belong to him with respect to the divine life and birth in him, as the sent one, and only-begotten, proceeding from the Father, the brightness of his glory, &c. For he, as the eternal Son of God, was the spiritual rock before he took upon him that body which was prepared for him, which expressly was called the body of Jesus, and which he called this temple; and distinctly, he being called Jesus Christ come in the flesh, which every spirit that confesseth not, is not of God, but is that spirit of antichrist, 1 John iv. 3.

He speaketh of sitting on the throne of David.

Ans. It is a great matter to know that throne which David's throne signified, and Christ sitting thereon. His kingdom, his throne, are not of this outward worldly nature, but inward and spiritual; and his throne is in his kingdom and temple, where he reigns, and is worshipped. He that knoweth Satan dishonoured and cast out, knoweth also Christ come in, and sitting on his throne. Oh! that men did give over their dreaming about the heavenly glory, and come thither in the leadings of God's Spirit where it is revealed.

Was the scripture written in vain concerning the glorious state of the gospel? But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

He putteth up a prayer for us, *That the Lord would awaken us, and make us do our first works, and return to our first love.*

Answ. Ah! poor man, how is he blinded! Not discerning how the Lord hath done this for us, and much more. But it is he himself that hath lost his first love, and doth not do his first works; but is found short of that tenderness, quickness, and savour that once was in him. Oh! that he might see it, and return to him whose quickening virtue restores and heals!

He concludeth with the words of the prophet *Jeremiah*, chap. xiii. ver. 15, 16, 17. *Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.*

Answ. How doth this man mistake in his sight and application of scriptures, seeing and applying in a wrong spirit? It is true, the Lord hath spoken; but he himself, and many such as he is, have not given ear. And what is the reason? but because they are exalted above the pure principle of life in their own hearts. And are not such proud? Hath not he brought forth these weapons, these false charges and reasonings, in this paper, against the heritage of God in the pride of his heart? As for us, the Lord God hath humbled us, and taught us, who have learned, and daily learn of him, in the humility, and in humility and fear do we give forth our testimony, though also in the authority and majesty of our master's name, whose name stands over and is exalted above every name, and his mountain and gathering is (in the pure authority and power of his Spirit) above all other mountains and gatherings whatsoever. And as for God's causing darkness, let him, and such as he is, look for it; for God doth not, nor will, cause darkness to them whom he hath gathered into the light of his Spirit; but saith to them, *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, O city and dwelling-place of the living God.* But those that know not, or turn against his appearance, and cry up former dispensations of the same life and power, but reproach and blaspheme the present, on them doth he cause the gross darkness to fall and cover them. And this which he threateneth us with, is already fallen upon himself, when his feet are fallen upon the dark mountains; and whilst he looks for light, he hath lost that which once he had; and his very light (as he esteems it) is become obscurity and gross darkness, as this dark paper of his (from the dark spirit and principle) makes manifest to all that shall read in it any measure of true sense or discerning. And truly my soul doth weep in secret for his pride
and

and height of spirit, in opposing the Lord, his truth, and people. And for this cause shall those, who have looked upon themselves as the children of the kingdom and flock of God, be laid waste; and know, that as it was a dreadful thing to oppose Christ Jesus, the Lord, in his appearance in flesh, so is it also dreadful to oppose his appearance in his Spirit and power, wherein he is arisen to set up his kingdom, and to throw down Babylon, which is built in the likeness of Sion, but by and in another spirit.

Those in whom there is any tenderneſs towards God (and true breathings after him left) the Lord give them the ſenſe and true underſtanding of this inward ſpiritual appearance of his Son, and of what they have been doing, and are doing, againſt it; that they may not continue to fight againſt the Lord, and kick againſt that which is able to wound and prick, to their own hurt, and eternal ruin. For there is not ſalvation in any other name than in that which is now revealed; bleſſed are all they that truſt therein, it being not another, but the ſame that ever was.

To his POSTSCRIPT.

HE beginneth it with the justification of that passage of his in a foregoing letter of his to me, wherein he saith, *Christ is beaven, and I am bell.*

Ans. When God visiteth man, he finds him in union with hell, death, and darkness; and the man is dead, is dark, is of an hellish nature and spirit in that state: but when the Lord hath converted him, cut him off from that root, leavened him with the Spirit and nature of his Son, is he hell still? *Ye were darkness* (saith the apostle) *but now are ye light in the Lord. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

A man can be but hell before he is washed, before his filth be purged away by the Spirit of judgment and burning, before the old leaven is purged out, and he sanctified and made a new lump; but after the Lord hath thus changed him, and new-created him in Christ, is he still hell?

He saith: He doth not call the new creature bell; but there is an old man, an outward man, as well as the new man, and the inward man, flesh as well as Spirit in the regenerate.

Ans. What doth he mean by the outward man? The sinful body, the body of flesh, is within. The outward body, that is not hell; that is the temple of God, where the heart is sanctified: and the pure Word of life sanctifies throughout, even in soul, in body, in Spirit, those that are subject to it. *Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the living God?*

And

And your spirits much more; for God is a Spirit, and he dwells in a spiritual temple, and his temple is holy.

He addeth: *And unless your attainment be beyond Paul's, he found that in him (that is, in his flesh) dwelt no good thing; and the flesh lusting against the spirit, so that he could not do the thing that he would.*

Answer. Paul did once experience such a state; that he felt himself carnal, sold under sin; when he did not find how to perform that which was good; but did what he hated, the law of sin being strong (in his members) against the law of life in his mind; which state he calleth a state of captivity to the law of sin in his members, and calleth it a wretched state, Rom. vii. 23, 24. But did Paul never experience another state? Did he never witness the virtue and power of the new covenant, even the law of the Spirit of life, and the power thereof, freeing him from the strength and captivity of the law of sin in his members? There were young men, John speaks of, who were strong, and had overcome the wicked one. Did Paul himself never attain to that state? He bid others be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and shewed them how to resist in it, so as to overcome. Did he never experience and witness it himself? He said, *He had fought a good fight, and was more than a conqueror.* What! was he then a captive to the law of sin in his members, and did he then cry out, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* He said, *He could do all things through Christ, that strengthened him.* Was not that a state different from that other wherein he found only to will, and could not do the good he desired, but did the evil he allowed not, but hated? And blessed be the Lord, there are many at this day who witness a farther state of redemption and deliverance from sin, and the law thereof in the members, than that state of captivity was which Paul there expresseth his former groanings and complainings under. For he was not in that state of captivity when he wrote that epistle, but knew the dominion of grace over sin, and bid that church be subject to the grace, and not give way to sin, but yield their members servants to righteousness unto holiness, chap. 6. For that other place, of the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, Gal. v. 17. he doth not there speak of himself, but of the Galatians, who were in a weak, low, and (indeed) fallen state, from the Spirit and power of the gospel, having let in that which was contrary thereunto. And so he strives to gather them into the Spirit again, and bids them live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and so they should not fulfil the lusts of the flesh: for in the new covenant man is taught of God the holy lesson of ceasing from evil, and doing good; and taught in the virtue and power of the covenant; so that he learns daily, and grows daily out of deceit into truth, until he come to be a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile. And so in the spiritual war, the house of Saul grows weaker and weaker, and the house of David stronger and stronger, until Saul's kingdom be at length overturned, and wholly destroyed, and the kingdom of David established in righteousness for ever and

and ever. Then Jerusalem, the holy building, the city of the living people, the city of righteousness (the habitation of righteousness, and mountain of holiness) is known, and Jerusalem is witnessed a *quiet habitation, there being peace in all her borders*. Then the mind is fully stayed upon the Lord in all conditions, and he keeps it in perfect peace. Then the soul is careful for nothing; but in every thing makes its requests known to God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. Surely the apostle had learned himself (when he taught others this) *in every state to be content*. He knew *how to be abased, and how to abound, &c.* O glorious state! O pure state of pure life in the heart! And if I should add, O perfect state! The apostle James saith, *Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing, or in nothing*, James i. 3. When Paul had so learned Christ that abundance could not lift him up, nor want deject him, or cause him to repine or distrust, what did he want of this perfect state?

His next words are, *If you have no sense of this, your state is never the better to be liked.*

Ans. Christ led captivity captive; and the same power is revealed to lead captivity captive in us. And truly when God leads our souls out of captivity, putting his fear within us, writing his living powerful law of life in our hearts, and putting his Spirit into us, leading us in the way of holiness, and causing us to walk therein, we find this a better state than when we were groaning under deep captivity.

Further he saith, *If your peace and joy stand in seeing no sin yourself* (in yourself I suppose it should be) *I shall more than suspect it not to be the peace and joy of Paul and all the saints, but a delusion.*

Ans. Our peace and joy is in him who is without sin; and it abounds in us, in his cleansing and delivering us from sin; and we have found him remove sin as far from us as the east is from the west; and as he removeth transgression from us, and bringeth sin and the power of Satan to an end in us, he giveth us of his peace and joy. And truly we do not only witness him destroying sin and the works of the devil, but breaking the very head of the serpent, casting him out, *and piercing Leviathan, that crooked serpent, and slaying the dragon that is in the sea*. And though such as he may suspect our peace and joy; yet, while Christ gives it us, and maintains it in us, it is very sweet and pleasant to us; and the time may come, that he may wish from his heart that he might partake with us therein.

He concludes the matter thus: *We are without sin in him, but in ourselves nothing but sin.*

Ans. He spake of delusion just before; a greater than this I do not know. For Christ doth make a real change; if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation, there is a real change. The man is not what he was before; but he puts off that which is old, and puts on that which is new;

new, and so is really changed in his state, and in the sight of God, and is not what he was before. The heart, when it is really renewed, and washed by the water, blood, and Spirit, is not the old, abominable, wicked, deceitful heart that it was before. If this be his knowledge and experience, let him keep it to himself: for my part, I desire not to partake with him therein; but to be like Christ, my Lord and master, even sanctified throughout in soul, body, and spirit, that I may become wholly his, and the enemy of my soul have no part in me.

He saith, *Christ shall appear without sin to salvation.*

Ans. I grant it; but when, and how? Doth he not inwardly appear without sin to salvation to those who have waited for, hastened, and come to the inward day? Doth not Christ appear without sin to salvation inwardly in the day of his own Spirit? Is not salvation then witnessed for walls and bulwarks? Is not the glorious salvation of the gospel brought forth in the gospel-day? And is there not in the life and dominion of grace a pure defence about all the glory? Is there any sin in the grace and Spirit of the gospel which appears and shines in the day of the Lord? And doth not this grace bring salvation to them that wait for the revealing of it?

He seemeth to clear himself of watching for our haltings.

Ans. Had he not watched for our haltings, and received things into, and considered them in the prejudiced part, he could not have written such a paper against truth and us, so far from true understanding and judgment, as this is.

But he saith, *He hath watched for our repentings.*

Ans. If we should repent of having our eyes opened by the Lord, and turning to his truth, and receiving his Holy Spirit, and of having the precious promises of the Scripture made good to us, and fulfilled in us, we might justly lose our portion and inheritance of life for ever. We have repented from dead works; but we cannot repent of God's pure truth, and the living way, spirit, and power thereof. But this I can tell him, and that from the Lord, whose name I reverence and worship in, that the Lord watcheth for his repentings, and turnings from that spirit in him which darkeneth him concerning, and prejudiceth him against, the truth.

He beseebeth me in love, &c. and requireth me to clear myself of free-will, falling from grace, denying election of persons, and imputed righteousness.

Ans. What the Lord requireth of me, that I must mind; and I have divers times expressed my heart nakedly in these things.

The principle of life which the Lord hath raised in me, in that is the freedom to good, and in that am I made free by Jesus Christ, my Lord. And I had rather witness him upholding me by his power, than contend about a notion of falling or not falling away. And my care hath been about making my calling and election sure in him, who is sure to those that are of him for ever. And I have witnessed the righteousness of the Lord

Lord Jesus Christ revealed in me, and imputed to me, and my soul clothed therewith in his sight; blessed be his name.

Oh! that the professors of this age might come to the anointing, and see those things in the anointing! then would they know the truth and harmony of the scriptures therein. But men, by the letter without the Spirit, can never discern or find out the mystery of life; but only gather into their minds and retain a literal knowledge, that killeth.

He bids me, *Love the truth better than a party.*

Ans. The Lord knoweth he hath taught me so to do: for had it not been for the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit in his people, I could never have owned them. (For oh! how low was the knowledge they held forth, in my eye, before the power of the Lord reached to my heart, raising up his own seed in me, wherein I knew them!) And the Lord also knoweth, that it is in him that I love, and discern, and honour them to this very day: yea, I see his name written on their foreheads, and them brought forth in the glorious image and heavenly life of his Son (though it be hid from the wise eye of the professors of this age), and in the true light, with the true eye (which God hath opened in me) have I seen it.

He speaks of *Clinging together, and keeping up a party against all right.*

Ans. Nay, nay; this is the gathering of the Lord Jesus Christ by his Spirit and power, after the long night of darkness; and we are kept up by the same Spirit, and power, and life of truth, which gathered us.

He saith, *It is not a calling for a work within, which will give you authority to lay waste Christ and the gospel, in the most fundamental and concerning truths thereof, and those above-mentioned, &c. And above all the rest, denying the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and making him but a light, or notion, or principle in the heart of man.*

Ans. This is but his own mistake, not a true and just charge against us, as he will one day see. The Lord hath not taught us to lay waste, nor do we lay waste any truth of the gospel; but own every thing in its place. And though our religion do not lie in notions concerning him, but in the principle of life itself, even in the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ (which is a measure of light from him the full light); yet we do not learn thereby to deny the full light, but the more to acknowledge it. And we own him to be the true and full light, and his outward appearance in that body, in the fullness of time, to fulfil the Father's will therein; and his appearance in Spirit and power in the hearts of his people in the day of the gospel; and his setting up his spiritual and glorious kingdom there, where he reigns as king on the throne of David over the spiritual Israel of God.

Come, consider seriously: Do not ye yourselves fall short of not only the principle and power of life, but also of the true knowledge of things according to the letter?

He confesseth, *There is too little power; and without it profession is little worth.*

Ans. Oh! that the professors of this age knew the scriptures and the power of God, and had that knowledge which comes from, and stands in, the power! For then that evidence and demonstration of truth would be witnessed which puts an end to the disputes and reasonings of the mind; and then the great care would be to live the life of that which God makes manifest and requires in the new covenant.

He saith, *To pull down the pillars and principles of the gospel, is the work the devil employs his power in.*

Ans. I grant what he saith is true (and wish he knew how rightly to apply it); but there is a great error and mistake in his judgment about it. For the Lord is pulling down that which men have built up (which they may, in their mistaken judgments, call principles and fundamentals), and is building up that which men have trampled on, even the tabernacle of David, which hath long been fallen down; and the city of the living God, which hath long been trodden under foot of the false Christians; and the power of the devil is greatly at work to oppose this appearance and mighty work of the Lord in this day. Let him take heed of blaspheming the Lord's power, calling it the devil's, and owning the devil's power for God's.

He concludeth thus: *Come to the point. What singular thing do you more than moding and wording it, save only that out of you have risen men that have more audaciously lifted up a standard against the sealed and experienced truths of the gospel than ever I have heard or read of any before you? You talk of words, and boast of perfection: I tell you, an humble sense of a man's nothingness, driving him out of himself to live and glory in Christ alone, is more than all such boasted perfections a thousand times. Sir, accept my zeal for your soul.*

Ans. We are a people (many of us) who have gone through great distress for want of the Lord our God, and exceedingly waited and longed for his living and powerful appearance. And for my own part, this I can say, that had not this appearance been in power, and in the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit to my soul (reaching to, and answering that which was of him in me) I could never have owned it; so deeply was I jealous of it, and prejudiced against it. And since my mind hath been turned to the pure Word of life, even the *Word which was in the beginning* (I speak as in the Lord's presence), it hath had singular effects on my heart. The light hath so searched me as I never was searched before, under all my former professions; and the Lord hath given me a true and pure discerning of the things of his kingdom, in the light which is true and pure; and singular quickenings have I met with from his Spirit, and the faith which stands in his heavenly power, and giveth victory and dominion in him; blessed be his name. And the love which he hath given me is not notional, but ariseth from his circumcising my heart, and answereth his nature;

ture; springing forth purely and naturally towards him, and those of his image, and all his creatures; yea, towards those who are enemies to me for his name's sake.

I might mention the patience also, and faithfulness to his truth, with the long-suffering spirit, which cannot be worn out; which his Spirit testifieth in me to be of a singular nature; with many other things. Nor am I alone, or the chiefest; but have many equals; yea, there are such as far exceed me in the heavenly and divine image of my Father. And the fruits are according to the root of life in us; and so acknowledged by all who look upon us with the true eye, with the eye of God's giving and opening.

Now the same that hath wrought thus inwardly in us, the same hath required some outward behaviour and expressions from us, which are foolish and weak to the eye of man's wisdom, but chosen of God to hide the glory of this life from that eye which discerns it not, but despises the day of small things. And though this be the least part of our religion (yet subjected to, because it is of God, whom we dare not disobey in the least), yet the spirit, which is contrary to God, casteth this upon us, as if this were all, or at least the main, wherein we differ from others. Some call the living words of truth from us (when God, according to his good promise, giveth them us) but canting; and thou callest all that is singular in us but *moding and wording of it*. Alas! it is in the main we differ from you; we holding our religion as we receive it from God, in the light and life of his Spirit: you as you apprehend it from the letter. Christ is our rock and foundation, as inwardly revealed; yours but as outwardly conceived of. We believe with the faith which is of the nature of him whom we believe in, which faith is mighty through God, and works through all the powers of darkness, giving victory over them all in God's way and time; ye believe with a faith which esteems victory, and a perfect and intire state (wanting nothing) as impossible while in this world. And as our root differs, so all that grows up in us differs from yours: so that indeed all is singular that is in us, and all also is singular that is brought forth by us, as the Spirit of the Lord, who knoweth the difference of things, witnesseth.

Have we so long walked in the name and Spirit of our God amongst you, shewing the singular virtues of his Spirit daily in our faithful testimony, sufferings, patience, and conversation? And do ye still cry, *What singular thing do ye?* Just like the Jews, who, after all Christ's mighty works, and demonstrations of his Father's virtue and power outwardly, *asked for a sign*. Oh! that your eyes and hearts were opened by the Spirit and power of the Lord! for then ye would soon see otherwise in this respect than now ye do.

And then as for that expression, *Of audaciously lifting up a standard against the sealed and experienced truths of the gospel*, that is but an over-confident expression, through prejudice and mistake of judgment at least: for I can

truly testify I have never learned, since the pure heavenly light of the Lord Jesus Christ hath shined on my spirit, to deny any one truth that ever was sealed to me, or experienced by me, in the days of my former profession; for whatsoever was then of God hath been restored to me, and that only which was of the flesh pared off. And I have ground also to believe, that it is so with others in this respect as it hath been with me.

He speaks, *As if our difference or talk were about words.*

Nay, it is about things: for though we own the same Lord Jesus Christ to be the foundation of life; yet after a different manner. Ye, as ye notionally apprehend concerning him; we, as we experience him to be the precious stone and foundation of life in us. And we testify of justification and sanctification, as we witness him bestowing it upon us, and working it in us.

But for boasting of perfection, I wonder how he dares speak thus! What! is there no fear of God before his eyes, or in his heart, that he dares charge us with that which is so utterly false? Where is any of us that did ever boast of perfection? But that God's power and covenant is able to make perfect, and that God's will is our perfect sanctification in soul, body, and spirit; even that we be wholly leavened with the salt of the kingdom, and become a fit temple for him. This we humbly and reverently testify of, and press towards, in his holy name and fear.

And as for that humble sense, *of a man's own nothingness, drawing him out of himself, to live and glory in Christ alone*, this we meet with, and witness in that light which this generation of professors despiseth. But others, tho' they may talk of it, can never come truly to witness it, but in that light wherein God bestoweth and preserveth it.

Well; the professors of this age, who despise the light, shall one day find, that what they take themselves to be, they are not, in God's sight; nor are we, before him, what we are reproachfully represented by them; *but we are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created by him unto good works*; and that it is natural to us to bring forth the fruits of righteousness and holiness to our God, however men reproach us.

As for his zeal for my soul, *which he desired me to accept*, it is strange zeal, and would tend to my utter destruction, had it power over me; but blessed be my God, who hath called me into the light of his Son, and I am satisfied that he will preserve me therein, even in that holy Spirit of life which he hath gathered me into, from all deceivable spirits of darkness whatsoever, in that holy covenant wherein his strength appears to me, and is revealed in me. And oh! that he might know what that spirit is wherein he hath thus appeared against the Lord (though under a pretence as if it were for him), and bring forth no more the fruits of it.

For a close, I shall add a few words on that scripture, *Phil. iii. 3. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* It is a precious thing to witness
this

this scripture fulfilled in the heart; to experience that there, which inwardly circumciseth, which cutteth off the foreskin of the heart, which lieth over it and veileth, till it be cut off by the inward appearance of the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ inwardly revealed. Then when this is done, I can truly and sensibly say, *I am a Jew inward.* How so? How can that be proved? Why I am inwardly circumcised. I have felt that within which circumciseth the heart, and have borne the inward pain and cutting thereof, and am circumcised by it. That which stood between me and the Lord is cut off, the veil is taken away, the stiff-neckedness and unsubmission to God removed, the wall of separation is inwardly broken down, and now I am in true unity of Spirit and communion with my God, even with the Father, and the Son, in that One Holy Spirit wherein they are One.

Now I can bow before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and worship him in his own Spirit, even in the new and fresh life thereof day by day. Now my rejoicing is in Christ Jesus, whom the Father hath sent, both outwardly in a body of flesh to fulfil the holy will, and do what therein the Father had for him to do, and also inwardly in his Spirit and power unto my heart, to destroy the works of the devil there, and so to work me out of the enmity and unreconciled state, into the love and reconciliation. And I cannot but rejoice both in what he did in his body of flesh for me, and in what he doth by his Spirit and power in me. And, blessed be the Lord, I feel him near, his Spirit near, his life near, his power near, his pure virtue near, his holy wisdom near, his righteousness near, his redemption near; *for he is my rock, and my strength, and my salvation, day by day.* And I have no confidence in the flesh, in what I am, in what I can do after the flesh; but my confidence is in him, who hath weakened me, who hath stripped me, who hath impoverished me, who hath brought me to nothing in myself, that I might be all in him, and that I might find him all unto me. He is my peace, he is my life, he is my righteousness, he is my holiness, he is the image wherein I am renewed; in him is my acceptance with the Father; he is my advocate, he is my hope and joy for ever. He hath destroyed that in me which was contrary to God, and keepeth it down for ever. He is my shepherd, his arm hath gathered me, and his arm encompasseth me day by day. I rest under the shadow of his wings, from whence the healing virtue of his saving health droppeth upon my spirit day by day. Oh! I cannot tell any man what he is unto me; but, blessed be the Lord, I feel him near, his righteousness near, his salvation daily revealed before that eye which he hath opened in me, in that true living sense wherewith he hath quickened me.

And now, ye that have high notions and rich comprehensive knowledge concerning these things, but not the thing itself, the life itself, the Spirit itself, the new and living covenant, and law of life itself, wherein alone Christ is livingly revealed. Ah! how poor, miserable, blind, and naked are you, in the midst of all your traditional knowledge and pretended experiences concerning these things!

Come,

Come, be quiet a while, and cease from bitterness of spirit, and reviling the work and people of the Lord; for the Lord knoweth, and will make manifest, both who are his, and who are not his. All the living stones are his; but the great professors of the words of scripture, without the Spirit and life of the scriptures, are not his, nor ever were, nor ever will be owned by him.

Come, learn to distinguish from God by his life, by his anointing, by the everlasting infallible rule, and not by words without life, where the great error and mistake hath been in all ages and generations. The great way of deceit hath long been (and still is) by a form of godliness, without power: be sure ye be not thus deceived; for if ye miss of the power which saves, ye cannot but perish for ever. And what if the appearance of the Spirit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ inwardly, which is that which saves, be as strange to your sense, understanding, and judgment, as his outward appearance was unto the people of the Jews? Take heed of their spirit, take heed of their judgment, who judged according to the appearance of things to them, which they imagined and conceived from the scriptures, but judged not the true and righteous judgment, which only the children of the true wisdom can.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THERE are *four* or *five* things very precious, which were generally witnessed in the days of the apostles among the true Christians, which are all mentioned together, *Heb. vi. 4, 5.*

First, *They were truly enlightened.*

The ministers of the gospel were sent by Christ, to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, *Acts xxvi. 18. 1 John i. 5.* And they were faithful in their ministry, and did turn men from the darkness and power of Satan to the light of God's holy Spirit; and they were enlightened by it, and received power through it, and so came to be children of the light, and to walk in the light, as God is in the light.

Secondly, *They tasted of the heavenly gift.*

What is the heavenly gift which Christ gives to those who come unto him, and become his sheep? He gives them life, eternal life, *John x. 27, 28.* He brings them out of death, and gives them a savour and taste of the life which is eternal. This was it which the apostles testified of, even of the life which was manifested in that body of flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ (*1 John i. 2.*); and they that turn from the darkness to his light, he gives them a taste of the same life.

Thirdly, *They were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.*

The gospel is a day of bringing forth the spiritual seed, and of pouring out the holy Spirit upon them. The law state is a state of servants; the gospel of sons! and because true believers in Christ are sons, *God sent forth the Spirit*

P O S T S C R I P T.

167

Spirit of his Son into their hearts to cry, Abba Father. And God cannot deny his own Spirit to his children that ask it of him; he knoweth how absolutely necessary it is to the state of a son; and whosoever truly receiveth Christ, Christ doth give him power to become a son; which power is in, and with, and cannot be separated from, his Spirit. Yea, the Spirit of Christ is so necessary and inseparable from him that is Christ's, that the apostle expressly affirms, that if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9.

Fourthly, *They tasted of the good Word of God.*

Of that Word from which the gift comes; of that Word which was in the beginning of the world, which is ingrafted into the hearts of those that truly believe; *which Word is able to save the soul.*

Fifthly, *They tasted of the powers of the world to come.*

Of the power of the endless life, whereof Christ is the minister, and according to which he ministers life, in that holy, true, living, inward, spiritual temple, which he pitcheth and reareth up for an habitation to God in his own Spirit.

Now in the apostasy and night of darkness, which hath come over the Christian state, these things have been greatly lost. For there have been none that have been found able to turn people to that light which the apostle directed to. None could tell men where the light is to shine, and where men were to expect it, and wait for it. None were able to direct men to the seed of the kingdom within, to the Word of faith, the Word of the kingdom, nigh in the heart and mouth; much less were they able to instruct men how they might know and distinguish it from all other seeds, and the voice of the shepherd from all other voices. Here it came to pass, that though at times God visited and opened mens hearts, a little warming them by the breath which came from himself; yet they not knowing how to turn to the Lord, and wait upon him for preservation in the gift and measure of his own grace, the good hath soon been stolen away from them, and the building which hath been raised up in them hath not been a building of life according to the Spirit, but a building of wisdom or knowledge concerning the things of God according to the flesh; and so the building that hath been raised up in mens spirits hath been Babylon, instead of Sion.

But the Lord hath had a remnant all along the apostasy, who felt some begettings of life, and had in measure some sense and taste of the heavenly things. These mourned after that state which was once enjoyed, and felt their want of it, travelling from mountain to hill, seeking their resting-place, which none could rightly inform them of. Now, for the sakes of these, God hath at length appeared.

How appeared? may some say.

Why thus: he who is light hath appeared inwardly, causing his light to shine inwardly, causing his life to spring inwardly; so that he who is light, who is life, who is truth, is felt and known in his own inward visits, break-
ings

ings-forth, and appearances. For God, who is a Spirit, his appearance is spiritual, his day is spiritual, his kingdom is spiritual, his light is spiritual, his life is spiritual, his day-star is spiritual; and his day dawneth, and his day-star ariseth in the heart. Thus *the day-spring from on high did visit us, who sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death.* And here we have met with what the apostles met with, the very same light of life, the very same enlightening Spirit and power, and have been enlightened by it, and tasted of the same gift.

The very same grace that appeared to them, and taught them, hath appeared to us, and taught us; and of it we have learned the same lessons, in the same covenant of life wherein they learned; and now can we seal to their testimony in the same Spirit wherein they gave it forth, and witness to the same eternal life, and the same holy oil and anointing, our eyes having been opened and kept open by it. And though there be great disputes about our testimony in this our day (and the present professors rise up against us, as the former professors did against them); yet let but any man come rightly to distinguish in himself between that which God begets in the heart, and all other births, and let that speak and judge in them, that will soon confess that our testimony is of God, and given forth in the authority and by the commission of his own Spirit. True wisdom is justified by the children that are born of her; it is the other birth that doth not, nor can own her. The other birth can own former dispensations (according to the letter of them); but not the life and power of the present.

I have known the breaking down of much in me by the powerful hand of the Lord, and a parting with much (though not too much) for Christ's sake. The Lord hath brought the day of distress and inward judgment over my heart; he hath arisen to shake terribly the earthly part in me (yea, what if I should say that the powers of heaven have been shaken also), that he might make me capable to receive and bring me into that kingdom which cannot be shaken. And now that which God hath shaken, and removed in me, I see others build upon, and they think it shall never be shaken in them; but such know not the day of the Lord, nor the terrible searching of his pure light, nor the operation of his power, which will not spare in one, what he hath reproved, condemned, shaken, and overturned in another. He that knows the living stone within, and comes to him as to a living stone, and is built upon the revelation of his Spirit, life, and power (revealed inwardly against the power of darkness) is not deceived. All that otherwise build (I mean upon an outward knowledge concerning Christ, and not upon his inward life) their building will not be able to stand in the day of the Lord. I wish they might have a sense of it in time, that they might not perish for ever; but experience that life and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, which redeemeth and preserveth out of the perishing state for ever and ever. Amen.

PRINCIPLE of TRUTH:

OR,

The **LIGHT WITHIN** Asserted,

AND

Held forth according to true Experience, and the faithful Testimony of the **SCRIPTURES**:

In the **ANSWERS** to **FOUR QUESTIONS**.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>I. What this Light is which we testify of, and what is the nature of it?</p> <p>II. What it doth inwardly in the Heart?</p> | <p>III. How it cometh to be lighted, set up, and increased there?</p> <p>IV. How it cometh to be diminished or extinguished in any?</p> |
|--|---|

A L S O.

An **A P P E A L**

T O T H E

WITNESS of GOD in all **CONSCIENCES**,

Which is the **MORE SURE WORD of PROPHECY!**

The Testimony of the **SCRIPTURES** without, or the Voice and Testimony of the Light and Spirit of **GOD** within, in the Heart.

By one once greatly distressed, but now at length, in the tender Mercy of the Lord, effectually Visited and Redeemed by the Light and Power of Truth,

ISAAC PENNINGTON.

THE [LAW] THE
PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH:

The LIGHT WITHIN Affected,

P R E A C E.



THE true ministers of the gospel, the ministers of the new covenant, were ordained and appointed by God to be ministers of light, ministers of righteousness, ministers of the Spirit, *Matt. v. 14. 2 Cor. xi. 15. chap. iii. 6.* And this was their work and service, even to preach the light, to deliver their message concerning the light, which they heard of Christ, and were sent by him to preach, as is recorded 1 *John i. 5.* So that they were to tell men what the light was, and where it was to be found; and to turn men from darkness to light, from sin and unrighteousness to purity and righteousness, from the spirit and power of Satan to the Spirit and power of the living God (*Dan. xii. 3. Acts xxvi. 18.*) that so they might come from under Satan's authority, power, and kingdom of darkness, into the light, wherein Christ reigns as king, priest, and prophet, unto and over all his; who is faithful in all his house, and Son and Lord of all, distributing life, righteousness, mercy, and peace to his whole family, as they abide in him, and walk in subjection to his Spirit. So that there is no condemnation to them that are gathered unto Christ, ingrafted into him, and who abide in him (walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit), who is the quickener, guide, and rule of all the children of the new covenant. For Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, in and to them all, and is made by God all in all unto them. He is their shepherd, their king, their captain, their vine, their olive-tree, their leader, their door, their path, their rule, their righteousness, their holiness, their wisdom, their redemption, their altar, their sacrifice, their priest, their prophet, their sabbath, their light, their day-spring, their bright and morning-star, their sun, their shield, their rock, and their high tower.

What shall I say? God hath gathered together all things into One, even in him, whose Spirit, life, and light eternal is the One substance, which answers all the figures and shadows of the law, and they are all comprehended, and fulfilled, and end in him. So that he is the end of the law for

or righteousness, to all that believe in him. And he ministers righteousness, he ministers truth, he ministers life, he ministers salvation, he ministers power, he ministers pure heavenly wisdom; and no good thing will he withhold from them that come unto him in the drawings of his Father, and follow him whithersoever he leads, and obey his gospel, which is everlastingly new and living.

Now, this precious ministry hath been withdrawn, and hid from ages and generations, in the long night of the great apostasy and thick darkness. And how could it be otherwise? For men being in the dark, and having erred from the true Spirit, and let in a wrong spirit, and built up wrong churches; and having not known the true wilderness (nor being willing to flee into it) whither the true church fled, and was nourished by God with the true food, even with the true living virtue and nourishment, all this dark night of the apostasy, I say, how could they come at the true light, the true Spirit, the true power (from which the true ministry is), which did not visibly now appear, but was with the true church in the wilderness? So that there hath been a true church all this while, which the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against, as to her inward temple and altar (nor over the worshippers which have worshipped therein), although they have gained the outward court; God having severed it from his inward building, and given it to the Gentiles in spirit; who are not true Jews, who are not worshippers in the Spirit, and in the truth, Rev. xxi. 1, 2.

But now, at length, blessed be the Lord, the long night of darkness draws towards an end; yea, is come to an end in many spirits; and the true light is broken forth again (and shineth again inwardly in many), and the true ministry is revived again, and the everlasting gospel (the everlasting covenant of life, mercy, and salvation, in and through Christ Jesus, the light and life of men) preached again. For now it is not only outwardly read, *that God is light*; but the message hath been received, and persons chosen, and sent forth by God to publish it; and to turn men from darkness to light, and from Satan's power to God. And, blessed be the Lord, the publishing of this precious testimony (in the power and authority of the Most High) hath not been in vain. But the captivity of many hath been broken by the power of light, and the power and strength of darkness (inwardly) overturned by it. Oh! how hath the strong man, which kept the house, before the stronger than he appeared in the name and authority of his Father; I say, how hath he trembled at the inward and spiritual appearance of him that was stronger than he? And how have the pillars of the old building been shaken? How hath the witness of God been reached to in mens spirits? How have the dead been raised, the blind eye opened, the deaf ear unstopped, the dumb tongue loosed, the lame caused to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, the inward spiritual leprosy cleansed, and done away for ever, the wounded healed, the broken-

hearted bound up? And what hath not the Lord done inwardly and spiritually for his people, who have been sensible of his appearance, and gathered by his Spirit and power to the true Shiloh, who is the true Shepherd, the land of the living, the holy city and temple, the light of the city, the life of the city, the gates and wall of the city, the king and kingdom both? For his life, his nature, his Spirit is All, and in All. Ah! what do we desire to have, but Christ the seed, and this seed sown in our hearts and abiding in us, and his life, righteousness and glory, his holy power, dominion, and kingdom, springing up in it? And as, in the apostles days, there was the seal to their testimony in peoples hearts, where their ministry was ordered by the Lord, and was received; even so it is now. Oh! how doth the witness answer in mens hearts, and consciences! And they that keep to the witness, and its testimony, not hearkening after words to the wisdom of the flesh; how do they become living epistles, to be seen and read of all men, as the Lord pleaseth to open that eye in any, which can see and read.

Now, to be often testifying of this light (which the Lord hath visited us with, and wherein we experience the knowledge of his Son, and redemption by him), to us it is not grievous; and it is good and safe for others. Therefore, it arising in my heart, in the springings of life, and lying upon me (as in the sight of the Lord) to give forth this further short testimony, for the sakes of such as have any desire to know and experience the truth, as it is in Jesus; I am given up in spirit to serve my God therein; and do give it forth in humility, in fear, in tenderness of spirit, in true love, with breathings to my God, that he would please to open the hearts of those that shall be inclined to read it, that they may feel somewhat of that in themselves, from which the testimony came; and so there-from may hear, in true sense and understanding, the true and good report of the sound of life and salvation in this our age, and may learn so to turn inwardly from the darkness to the light, from the power of Satan to God's Spirit and appearance inwardly, that the arm of the Lord may be revealed in them, and powerfully stretched out for them.

And this is the precious knowledge of Christ indeed, even to know Christ the power of God, Christ the wisdom of God, inwardly revealed and working in the heart, destroying sin there, and building up the holy building, wherein he himself will dwell and reign. Oh! that all that truly breathe after him, might not be withheld from him (and his living testimony, and inward appearance) by the power of darkness and deceit, which works subtilly in the heart against the appearance, power, and work of the Lord there, but might thus come to know him! Amen.

THE
 ANCIENT PRINCIPLE of TRUTH;
 OR,
 The LIGHT WITHIN Asserted, &c.

QUESTION I.

WHAT is this Light, which we so earnestly testify of, and whereof we affirm, That all men are (or have been) in some measure enlightened by it? And what is the nature of it?

A N S W E R.

It is that which shineth from God in the heart, wherein God is near to men; and wherein and whereby men may seek after God, and find him.

God is a Spirit; and his Spirit and presence is near to all men. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?* Psal. cxxxix. 7, &c. It is impossible for any so to do. For God, who is a Spirit (and the Father of spirits), is nigh to every spirit. Every spirit depends upon him the fountain of spirits; and hath its being, life, and motion from him, and in him, after a sense; though not after such a sense, as they who are quickened by him experience.

Now God, who is light, being so near every man, doth he never shine upon them? They are darkness; but doth he never appear in the darkness? He who is light, loveth mankind; doth he never visit them with his love? He knoweth what and how great inward and spiritual enemies mankind have; doth he never make any discoveries of their enemies to them? Yes; the light is near all mankind, to discover to them, and help them against the darkness; and the love is near to help them against the enmity which destroyeth, and so to save them. For whosoever joineth to the light of God's Spirit, cannot but witness salvation thereby; for it is of a saving nature,

nature, and bringeth salvation with it to all that receive it. Christ is in it, and is known by it (inwardly, spiritually, livingly known), and he is not, nor can be known without it. He that knoweth the light of God's Spirit, knoweth Christ; and he that believeth in it, believeth in him; and he that knoweth not, nor believeth therein, neither knoweth nor believeth in Christ. So that as the Jews circumcision outward, and their knowledge and thinking to be justified by the righteousness and works of the law (which most of them brake, and were transgressors of; though Paul said, he was, *touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless*); I say, as this was disowned, and denied by Christ and his apostles; and the circumcision, and work of God on the hearts of the Gentiles set over it, and exalted above it, as *Rom. ii.* so is it now also. The knowledge of those, and belief of those who own the light, and believe in the light, is owned by God's Spirit (in this our day) for the true believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for that knowledge which is life eternal; and the knowing, and believing on him, as men account it, according to their apprehensions of the letter, without this, is reckoned with God for ignorance and unbelief.

So that in this is God known, in this is Christ believed in. Here God draws nigh to every man, and is a God not afar off, but nigh at hand; and his salvation is nigh, and his righteousness ready to be revealed here; and here every man may seek after and obtain the knowledge of him, the saving knowledge, the knowledge of the grace, of the gift of grace which brings salvation. In this is the Son kissed, in this is he drawn nigh to, and come to by the soul, and not out of it. Here are the drawings of the Father felt. Let any man feel this, he feels that which begets to God; he feels that which comes from the Son, is of the nature of the Son, wherein the Father draws the heart of the child whom he begets, to the Son. And in this as the soul comes, it comes out of the darkness wherein Christ is not nor dwells, into the light wherein Christ is with the Father; and so in this the soul is ever near, and out of it still afar off. In this is the holy root witnessed, and the ingrafting thereinto; out of this the holy root is not known, nor can men understand what it is to be ingrafted into him, and how he is an olive-tree, a vine, a door, a shepherd, a leader, a captain, a redeemer. Nor can men possibly know the voice of the true shepherd from the voice of a stranger, till they come hither; nor how the true shepherd walks before his sheep, and what it is to follow him out of that which destroys, into that which regenerates, makes new and living, till they come hither.

Now this inward light is abundantly testified of in the scriptures.

As first by Moses, who speaking of the other covenant, the new covenant, the covenant of circumcising the heart, turneth or directeth the mind to this word or commandment nigh, whereby alone it can be done, as

Deut.

Deut. xxx. And this was the reason why God so often commanded the Jews to circumcise their hearts, and to wash them and make them clean from their wicked ways and vain thoughts; because Moses had directed their minds to that, and that was near to them, wherein and whereby it might be done. In another place, he bids them make them a new heart, *Ezek. xviii. 31.* How could that be done? Why, by turning to God's Spirit which strove with them, his power would effect it in them; and men are said to purify their hearts, through the Spirit, in loving and obeying the truth which doth it, *1 Peter i. 22. John xvii. 17.*

Secondly, By Job, who speaks of God's candle shining upon his head, and of walking through darkness by his light, *chap. xxix. 30.* He speaks likewise of those that rebel against the light, that know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof, *chap. xxiv. 13.*

Thirdly, By David, who by it saw through the types and shadows to the substance, and grew wiser than his teachers, he knowing the word within, and having his candle lighted by it, so that he knew the inward law which converts the soul, and was led by God's light and truth shining in his inward parts, *Psal. xliii. 3.*

Fourthly, By Solomon, *The commandment is a lamp, and the law light, and the reproofs of instruction the way of life, Prov. vi. 23.* Every one that experienceth the light, the law, the commandment within, knoweth it to be thus. Again saith he, *The path of the just is a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, chap. iv. 18.* Just as a light, which shines outwardly, is to the outward man; such is the inward light to the inward man; yea more: for inwardly the light and the way is all one. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, which are three names of one and the same thing. And he that walks in the light, walks in the way of life and holiness; which he that walks in the darkness walks out of. I shall mention but one place more, which is very differently rendered, it is *chap. xx. 27.* The new translation renders it thus, *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.* The old thus, *The light of the Lord is the breath of man, and searcheth all the bowels of the belly.* The heart of man (the unregenerate mind, the unregenerate spirit), is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; that whereby God searcheth it, is his light, his candle, his own Holy Spirit.

Fifthly, By the prophets, as Isaiah, Jeremy, Ezekiel, Micah, &c. who said, *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy; and to humble thyself, to walk with thy God? chap. vi. 8.* How doth God shew this to mankind, but by the inward light of his Spirit.

Sixthly, By John Baptist, who was the fore-runner, and testified of Christ as of the inward and spiritual baptizer, who had his fan in his hand. What is that? What doth Christ fan with? What doth he fan, and with what? The light within is a fan, the Spirit within is a spirit of judgment and burning;

ing; it scatters the darkness; yea, it consumes and burns up the dross and stubble there.

Seventhly, By Christ himself, who said, *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*, John iii. 19. Mark how Christ preached the light (the seed, the kingdom, the heaven), and bid men bring their deeds to it, and blamed them that did not, ver. 20, 21. How can there be an inward Jew, an inward circumcision, without an inward law, inward light, and inward testimony? And to this inward law and testimony, must the inward Jew daily have recourse, and bring his deeds thither, to be judged and scanned there.

Again, Christ saith, *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*, chap. viii. 12. How is Christ the light of the world? Or how was Christ the light of the world? Was he only so, as he appeared in that body of flesh? Is he not so in his inward and spiritual appearance? Is he not the universal light, the Sun of righteousness, which enlighteneth the whole dark world? Yet again he saith, *Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light*, chap. xii. 33, 36. This is Christ's direction to men how they may become true believers; to wit, by believing in the light. The light shines in the darkness (*ye were darkness*), and by believing in it, men become children of it.

Eighthly, By the apostles and evangelists. They were sent to turn men from darkness to light, *Acts xxvi. 18.* and they testified of the light they were to turn men to; delivered their message that God was light, and that in him was no darkness at all. They preached Christ the light, the life, the way, the truth; they turned men from Satan's spirit which is darkness, to God's Spirit which is light.

John the evangelist testified of *the word which was in the beginning*, and said, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not*, chap. i. 4, 5. And again saith, speaking of him, *That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, ver. 9.

Paul saith, *Whatsoever doth make manifest is light*, Ephes. v. 3. Wherefore awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, ver. 14. for God hath sent forth the light of his Son to rouse thee. Again, he professedly averreth, that the word nigh in the mouth and heart, was that word of faith which he preached, *Rom. x. 8.* If so, then that is the word of faith which is to be believed in, if men would believe in Christ, and be saved by him.

James speaketh of God as the Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect gift proceedeth, chap. i. 17. Then surely from him is the
grace

grace, and the gift (the free gift) by grace, which is upon all to justification of life, that receive it, and follow the teachings of it.

Peter speaks of the more sure word of prophecy, to which men should take heed; and wait (in taking heed to that) for the dawning of the day, and the arising of the day-star in the heart, *2 Peter i. 19.* Indeed, all men ought to wait for, and give heed to, the light of God's Holy Spirit, and the holy prophecies, warnings, and directions thereof in their hearts.

And John, at last, as I may say, in that book of the Revelation (closing up the testimony of that age and generation) speaks of walking in the light of the Lamb, *chap. xxi. 23, 24.* (which every one that comes to witness the true light ought to do, else there is no true fellowship with God, nor with his sanctified ones, who are gathered into and walk in the light, even as God is in the light, *1 John i. 7.*) And the angel that opened the prophecies and mysteries of that book to John, said, that *the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy*, *chap. xix. 10.* So then, he that hath this spirit of prophecy, he that hath this inward light, hath the testimony of Jesus; but he that hath it not, hath not the testimony itself, but only words concerning the testimony. For this is the distinction between the true believer and the false: the true believer hath the spirit of prophecy, the witness in himself, *1 John v. 10.*: the false believer hath but the outward testimony or relation of things; but not the inward substance, the covenant and law of life within.

Q U E S T I O N II.

What doth this light do inwardly in the hearts of those that receive it, believe in it, and give up to it?

A N S W E R.

It doth all that is requisite to be done, from the soul's coming out of spiritual Egypt into the land of rest; and all that is needful for its growth and preservation there.

First, It enlighteneth. It sheweth what is evil, and also what is good, according to the measure and proportion of it, and according to God's causing it to shine in the heart. It discovers the mystery of darkness, the mystery of ungodliness, the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of deceit in all its mysterious workings; for nothing is hid from the light of him with whom we have to do. And it also discovers the mystery of godliness, the mystery of holiness, the pure way and commandment of life; and gives all the believers (the true believers in Christ) this experience, that *his commandment is life everlasting*. There is nothing the heart needs desire to know of God, but this makes it manifest in the due season. It opens the very mystery of the scriptures, gives the right understanding and

application of the promises, and fulfils the prophecies thereof in the heart.

Secondly, It doth not only manifest the good and evil, but likewise inclines the mind to chuse the good, and refuse the evil. It draws from the evil, and towards the good; yea, and the soul is made willing in the day of him who is light, and who appears in the light, and reveals his power there. There is a way, an high-way, spoken of, *Isa. xxxv. 8.* called the way of holiness, which the unclean can neither discern nor pass over to; but the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, the measure of grace and truth wherewith he enlightens men, so manifests and leads into this way, that they that are taught and guided by him, shall walk therein, and not err.

Thirdly, It scatters the darkness, breaks the power of the enemy; it makes one with him who is all power, and giveth to partake thereof; so that power is given to become sons in the light, to the children of the light; power given to become kings and priests to God; power given to reign in the dominion of his life, in the dominion of his truth, over sin, over death, over deceit; and to offer up the holy living sacrifices to God.

What shall I say? It is one with Christ, it is of his heavenly Spirit and nature, it makes way for him, it leads to him, it fills with him, it brings into unity and fellowship both with the Father and the Son, where the peace which passeth understanding, and the joy unspeakable and full of glory, abounds. This is the gospel message, that God is light; and they that are gathered into and abide in this light, they are gathered into, and abide in unity and fellowship, both with the Father and the Son.

David had great sense, and great experience of this light of God's Holy Spirit, and of his truth sent forth, manifested, and revealed in his inward parts, as is signified, *Psal. li. 6.* and again, in that vehement prayer of his, *Psal. xliii. 3.* *Ob! send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God the gladness of my joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.* Indeed when the light shines, and the truth springs up in the heart, it leads to him that is true, it leads to the holy hill and mountain of the Lord, and to the inward altar; which they have no right to, who serve and worship at the outward; and the harp is known whereon the Most High is praised, even that inward harp, whereof David's outward harp was but the figure. Therefore they that come to the holy hill of God, to the mountain of the Lord's house, and to that holy building which was reared there, they invite and encourage others to walk in that light which led them thither, wherein communion with God, and one with another, and the blessings of life and peace are enjoyed, *Isa. ii. 5.*

But what should I speak of the sufficiency of the light and grace of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, or of what it is able to do, and of what he is pleased to work by it? I shall only say this, that as the fullness was enough for Christ, and to fit him for the work which he had to do; so the measure

measure of grace and truth which he bestows, is enough for every man. *My grace is sufficient for thee*, said God to Paul; and so it is for every man. There is no want of sufficiency in the grace of God, in the seed of the kingdom, in the pearl of price, in the holy leaven, in the heavenly salt; but the virtue and strength of it is greater than the enemy is able to withstand; and he that keeps to it, and departs not from it, shall feel life and power springing up in it, to quicken him and carry him through all that God requires of him. For the water which Christ gives is a well, springing up (in him to whom it is given) unto life eternal; and this water is able to wash, able to nourish, able to fill the soul with living virtue, which waiteth for it and partaketh of it. And all the nations of them that are saved, are to walk in the light of God's Spirit. To this men are to be turned, unto this they are to be gathered, into this they are to be translated (even from the kingdom of darkness, into the Son's marvellous light); and being changed by it (into its nature) become light in the Lord, and ought to walk in the light, as God is in the light, 1 John i. 7.

Q U E S T I O N III.

How doth the mind come to be enlightened, and the candle of the Lord come to be set up in the soul?

A N S W E R.

By God's causing it to shine there, and the mind's being turned to it, and given up to be exercised by it, as it pleaseth the Lord to cause it to shine.

The power of the Lord reacheth to the pure principle of life and light in the heart, in the seasons of his good pleasure. This being reached to and touched by the Lord, answers his touch, his visit, his call; and the mind being turned to it, sensible of it, and willing to let it into its nature and spirit, and to become one with it (suffering with it, and bearing its cross); the seed cometh to grow there, the light which was hid and overwhelmed under the earth (under the earthly wisdom, the earthly will, the earthly knowledge, the earthly desires, the earthly delights, &c.) cometh to be lighted up there; yea, the life cometh to be quickened more and more, and the holy leaven to spread more and more there. And this sensible plant of God's renown being thus entertained, and being not afterwards grieved, despised, quenched, or hurt, by the giving way to, and letting in of that which is contrary to it, it shooteth up into a kingdom of righteousness, into a tree of righteousness, within the compass whereof, and under the shadow whereof, the soul sitteth down in peace and rest, and is defended and nourished with that which is pure and living, and full of the pure sap and virtue, and so becomes strong in the Lord, and in the

power of his might, against the power and strength of darkness. Now this all men may experience (at first in some low measure and degree, and afterwards more and more), as they come to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God, and good in the heart, and come to join and give up to it. For then it will be working against, and purging out, that which is of a contrary nature, and overspreading the heart with its own nature; inasmuch as that which was the least will become the greatest; and that which was the lowest of all (and indeed trampled under foot) will rise up into dominion and power over all, and bring all under. So that the lofty city, the lofty building of fleshly wisdom, and of sin and iniquity in the heart, will be laid low, and the feet of the seed shall tread it down; even the feet of that which was once poor and needy, until it was anointed, and its horn exalted by the Lord.

Q U E S T I O N IV.

How is the light or candle of the Lord diminished, and at length extinguished or put out in some? Or how cometh that about?

A N S W E R.

By their neglecting, despising, quenching it; hearkening and giving way to the contrary spirit in its motions and temptations. For as the good let in, stops and works out the evil; so the evil let in, stops and works out the good: so the Philistine nature given way to, stops the inward well which Jacob had digged and opened. There is a time when life is a mystery, a fountain sealed; and there is a time wherein God unseals the fountain, and opens the mystery in the heart. Oh! then great care is to be had, and the soul is to lie very low in the pure fear, that it may continue in his goodness, and walk worthy of his love, that the fountain may be kept open, and the pure springs of the Holy Land flow, and not be sealed and shut up again. For there are some that rebel against the light, and they dwell in a dry land. There were some that did always resist and vex God's Spirit, and the Lord's Spirit ceased striving with them, and gave them up to a reprobate sense and judgment concerning the things of God. There are some that do not improve God's good talent, and from them that which was once given is again taken away. Yea, the candle of the wicked shall one time or other be put out, and they shall be silent in darkness, and their mouth stopped from having any thing to say against God, his truth, and people, for evermore. And all men had need to take heed how they be wanton with the grace of God, or despise the day of their visitation by the holy light of God's Spirit; for if God take away the talent, if God put out the inward candle, who can light it again? Oh! how did poor David, the man after God's own heart, suffer by letting the enemy's temptations in upon him! *Cast me not away from thy presence, said he, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.* Indeed he did lose his condition.

tion at the present, and he speaks as a man in danger of being quite undone ; though afterwards he came to comfort and assurance that God would restore him to the joy of his salvation, and light his candle, and enlighten his darkness again.

But I am not insensible of what doubts and disputes there are in mens minds about this testimony which we give (from certain knowledge and true experience) concerning the light wherewith God enlighteneth souls. At first, when the testimony first came forth, men would not grant such a thing as a light from God in men, which convinced of and reprov'd for sin ; but now there are many will assent to that, who yet cannot believe it to be a measure of the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, and that in it the sufficiency and power of God is revealed, against the strength and power of Satan. But let such seriously consider,

First, Who they are that have testified, and testify, of this light. They are persons who generally have been deeply exercised in religion : persons who have read the scriptures very diligently, with much praying and waiting upon God, for the true, certain, and clear understanding of them : persons who (several of them) have had experience of most (if not all other) separated ways, but could never meet with the answer of the cry of their souls, nor with satisfaction to that birth which breathed in them after the Lord night and day.

Secondly, What their testimony is ; which is manifold. As first, that they were by the Lord (even by his Holy Spirit, and the shinings and springings of his precious seed in them) turned to this light, and shewn it to be of God. Secondly, That in turning to it, they still meet with the presence, appearance, and power of the Lord working in their hearts. Thirdly, That it did not only discover sin to them, but also powerfully resist it, fight against it, and bring it under ; which no light and power besides the light and power of God's Spirit can do. Fourthly, That the life of the Son is manifested and revealed in it, and they come therein truly to see, and taste, and handle the Word of eternal life. Fifthly, That in this light they come to witness cleansing by the blood of the Lamb, and the everlasting covenant made with them (even the sure mercies of David), and the holy precious promises fulfilled in them, whereby they are made partakers of the divine nature, and come to witness an entrance into the holy city, and drink of the streams of the pure crystal river, which refresh and make glad the city of our God, and all the tabernacles wherein he dwells. Lastly, To mention no more, the Lord hath shewn them how this had been formerly with them, even in the days of their former profession ; and how God had wrought by this in them in former times, though they then knew it not ; and that all their ability then to understand any thing of God aright, or to pray unto him, or reap any true benefit from the scriptures, was through the stirring of this in them, whereby God even then, in some measure, enlightened and quickened their minds. For there being such a principle

ciple in man, it works variously, and many times when he is not aware of it: and he hath benefit thereby, if he resist it not, but receive its influence and operation, though he hath not the strictest knowledge and discerning of it.

Thirdly, Again consider whether the light of Christ's Spirit, or the grace and truth which is come by Jesus Christ, hath not this property of discovering, convincing, and reproofing for sin. Doubtless the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, in the lowest ministration of it, is of that nature, that it discovereth and fighteth against the law of sin and death, where-ever it finds it. And whether the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of truth, who leads out of all error and falshood, and into all truth, is not as well to be known by this, even by his convincing the world of sin, and inwardly reproofing for sin, as by his comforting of the saints, in their holy travels out of sin, and battles against sin.

Consider, Fourthly, whether any thing can convince of sin but the light of God's Holy Spirit shining in the heart? There may be an outward declaration of sin by the law outward; but it never reacheth the heart and conscience but by the shining of the light inward. Nay, it cannot so much as reach to the understanding, but as God opens the heart, and brings home the conviction by his light and power. This we have experience of in the Jews; who though the prophets came with certain evidence and demonstration from God's Spirit, yet they were not convinced thereby, but stood it out against the prophets, and justified themselves against the voice and Word of the Lord; their eyes being closed, their ears shut, and hearts hardened against that of God in them, as may be read in *Jeremiah*, chap. ii. and divers other places, even to admiration. And what wickedness is so great which the hardened man will not plead for, and be defending and justifying himself in! Yea, if God do open mens understandings in some measure, so that they cannot but confess such and such things to be evil in general (as pride, covetousness, drunkenness, riotousness, excess in apparel, lying, swearing, &c.) yet they are not able to see the evil and danger of these things in and to themselves, but have covers and excuses to hide them, unless the inward light and Spirit of the Lord search their hearts, and make them manifest to them.

Fifthly, Consider the weight and proper tendency of these two scriptures, and do not form another meaning, and so put off the drift and intent of God's Holy Spirit in them. The first is that of the apostle, *Ephes. v. 13, 14. But all things that are reprov'd, are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, &c.* Every man is bid to awake, because every man hath some proportion of that in him, which (if hearkened to) will reprove, rouse up, and awaken him, and lead him from among the dead, to him who gives the light, and causeth it to shine in him, even in the midst of his darkness and corruption, that it might awaken him out of it. The other scripture is that of *Gal. v. 27.* where

where the apostle speaks of the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. Did not God's Spirit strive with the old world; not only with the sons of God, who had corrupted themselves, but with the rest also? And what is it that hath striven with wicked men since, and that doth strive with wicked men still? Is it not the same good Spirit? What is it also that inwardly resists and lusts against the will and strivings of God's Spirit? Is it not the flesh? So here are the two seeds, the two principles (which are contrary one to the other) near man. For there is the creature man (which of right is the Lord's) into whom the destroyer hath gained entrance, and in whom he rules by the law of sin and death. Now he who made man, seeketh after him, and findeth out his enemy in man, and giveth forth a law against him inwardly in the heart; which, so far as any man gives ear to, believes, and receives, there ariseth presently a fight and striving between these two contrary principles in him, so that this man cannot do the things that he would. Now that which thus strives against sin in any man, and troubles him because of sin, reprovng and condemning him for it, that is of another nature than the flesh (which harbours sin) and contrary to it.

Lastly, Consider the great love of God to mankind, and the great care he hath of them. First, as touching their bodies; how doth he provide for the bodies of all mankind! He would have none hurt, none destroyed; but feedeth all, nourisheth all, making plentiful provision, and giving fruitful seasons; causing his sun to shine, and his rain to descend on all. Then as to their souls, he knoweth the preciousness thereof, and what the loss of a soul is; yea, he knoweth how eager the devourer is to destroy, and setteth himself against him. He is the Father of spirits, and his Son the Shepherd and bishop of souls, whose nature it is to gather and save; and it is said expressly of God, by the testimony of the Spirit of truth, that he would have all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. And whereas it was said to the Jews, that God was as the potter, and they as the clay, and he could make them vessels either of honour or dishonour at his pleasure, *Jer. xviii. 6.* yet it was to this end, even to invite and encourage them to be subject to him, that they might be made vessels of honour by him, as appears *ver. 11.*

Now consider, if God be as tender of souls as of the bodies of men, doth he not make provision for the soul as well as for the body? Would he not have the soul live, and would he not have the soul fed as well as the body? If so, then needs must the light of his Holy Spirit shine inwardly throughout all nations, and the saving grace and power be manifest every-where, even in every heart, in some measure, and the flesh and blood of the Son of God (which is the soul's food) be distributed to all. And truly the Lord is not an hard master to any (as the unprofitable servant, in every dispensation, is ready to account of him); for the times of ignorance and darkness God winketh at, or passeth over, being very tender towards men in that estate;

estate; yea, a little that is of him turned to and heeded, according to the measure of understanding that God gives, will be owned and accepted, even in the midst of a great deal of darkness and evil working against it.

There was a time before the law (for the law was given by Moses): what saved then? Was it any thing but the saving grace, the saving light, the saving Spirit, the holy anointing? Could any be saved but thereby?

What saved under the law? Did the shadows then save, or the substance of life veiled under them? Did not the Spirit then work inwardly, redeem inwardly, save inwardly? Did not the word or commandment nigh in the mouth and heart (to which Moses, by God's direction, had turned their minds) enlighten and save inwardly?

And any of the Gentiles, as the Word or Spirit of life did work in them, did it not circumcise inwardly, and save them also? So that though they had not the law or ministration of Moses outward, yet they had the inward writing from God on their hearts, and shewed the work and efficacy of it there, and shall at last be justified by, and according to, the everlasting gospel, which justifieth all whatsoever, so far as in any measure they receive and are subject to the light and law of God's pure Spirit, which the carnal mind cannot receive, nor be subject to.

Oh! that men could die to themselves, even to their own wisdom and prudence, and not lean to their own understandings, nor idolize their own apprehensions and conceivings, but wait to receive understanding from God, who giveth liberally of the true wisdom to those that ask and wait aright! And how doth God give true wisdom and understanding? Is it not by the shining of his light in the heart? Oh! that men were turned inwardly thither, and inwardly dead to that wisdom and prudence from which God ever hid things, and ever will! He that will be truly wise, must first become a fool, that he may be wise; that is, he must not strive to learn in the comprehensive way of man's wisdom and prudence the things of God's kingdom; but feel the begettings of life in his heart, and in that receive somewhat of the new and heavenly understanding, and so die to the other, and know no more the things of God after the flesh; that is, as a wise man, as a learned scribe, as a great disputant (for where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Can they find out the mystery of life, the mystery of God's kingdom in this age, any more than they could in former ages?) but become a babe, a fool, and so receive and bow to that which his own wisdom will call foolishness, and account weakness; but the other birth, which is begotten and born of God, will know, and daily experience, to be the wisdom and power of God unto salvation.

A N
A P P E A L
TO THE
WITNESS of GOD in all CONSCIENCES,
WHICH IS THE

More sure Word of PROPHECY? The Testimony of the
SCRIPTURES without; or the Voice and Testimony of
the Light and Spirit of GOD within, in the Heart.

THE apostle Peter speaks of a more sure word of prophecy (or a more sure prophetic word, as the Greek hath it) than that voice which came from heaven, which they heard when they were with Christ in the holy mount, 2 *Pet.* i. 18, 19. Now what this more sure word is, which ought to be given heed to in the most especial manner, more than to such an eminent voice and testimony from heaven, even from the excellent glory, is a very great and weighty question. Now some affirm, that it is the word and testimony of the scriptures without; others affirm, that it is the voice, sound, and testimony of the Word of Life within.

I do not know a scripture that my heart hath more been tenderly solicitous about, desiring to give due honour both to the Spirit of God, and to the holy scriptures, and also to understand what the Lord would have me in the most especial manner give heed to, until the season came from him, in which he should cause the day to dawn, and the day-star to arise in my heart. And now, that others might come to the same understanding and satisfaction also, are these following considerations proposed in the weight of my spirit to them.

First, Consider how sure the word of prophecy was, how sure the voice and testimony from heaven was; than which, the apostle directs them to somewhat as more sure. This I may clearly say of it, it was undoubtedly from God, and that in a very extraordinary manner, even in Christ's presence, when Moses and Elias were with him, and God bestowing upon him honour and glory, transfiguring him before his disciples, causing his face to shine as the sun, and making his raiment white as the light, *Matt.* xvii. 2.

And the intent of it was to give the disciples full evidence and satisfaction ~~(for the voice was not for his sake, but for theirs), or rather that they might~~ have a full ground, after his death and resurrection, to testify for the satisfaction and confirmation of others; ~~for till then they were to keep it secret,~~ *ver. 9.* Now that which was provided for this end, doubtless was very sure, and testified by them who were chosen to be faithful witnesses in this respect.

Secondly, Consider whether the testimony of the prophets concerning Christ were surer than the immediate voice from God himself? Were they surer to those that lived in those days, or to those that should come after, ~~than this testimony was to the apostles, and to those that did communicate~~ it in the will and counsel of the Lord? The prophets did testify from God's holy unerring Spirit; but they that lived in those days did not always believe and receive their prophecies, but sometimes doubted of them, and questioned them: yea, their prophecies were not always evident, and clearly understood by those who desired to understand; but their visions were many times a book sealed, both to the learned and unlearned. But this testimony, this word of prophecy, this voice from the excellent glory (*This is my beloved Son, hear him*) is a very plain, evident, full testimony, easy to be understood by any in that present, or in after ages. And I must confess, as to myself, the reading of it did always deeply affect and satisfy my heart.

Thirdly, Consider the manner of God's appearing to the prophets, and compare it with the manner of this appearance. God appeared to them sometimes in visions, sometimes in dreams. Moses saw a bush burning, and heard a voice. *The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, Isai. i. 1.* And Ezekiel saw visions, *chap. i. 1.* And Daniel had a dream and visions on his bed, *Dan. vii. 1.* And Jeremiah had that sweet prophecy (of God's satiating the weary soul, and replenishing every sorrowful soul) in his sleep, *Jer. xxxi. 26.* Now here to these blessed apostles was a vision given of the glory of Christ, and of Moses and Elias with him; not in the mind or head, as Daniel's visions were, *Dan. vii. 1.*; but the excellent glory did appear, and Christ, Moses, and Elias were really there together on the mount (which is more than a prophetic vision of a thing), and Christ was cloathed with, and swallowed up in, the glory. For God the Father did set himself to glorify him, so as never man was glorified before; and the voice came (the certain voice; what voice could be more certain?) from the excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, 2 Pet. i. 17.* And this pure vision of glory (even of God's thus appearing, and Christ's thus transfiguring) they saw, and heard the voice which came from heaven, when they were with him in the holy mount. Now were the prophecies of the prophets that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, and that he should be thus and thus, &c. equal to this in evidence and demonstration? Why was John greater than the rest of the prophets? Was it not in that he was chosen

chosen to be the immediate forerunner and preparer of the way, and could point with his finger to the Messiah? And yet is not this immediate testimony from the excellent glory greater than the testimony of John?

Fourthly, Consider whether Christ's own words in the flesh to his disciples were surer than the voice from the excellent glory? If I should extol the words of Christ in the flesh above the words of the prophets which testified of him, should I therein do the words and testimonies of the prophets any wrong? He was the Son; he had the fullness of life, the fullness of the Spirit, the great authority and virtue of God his Father. God (saith the apostle) *who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son*, Heb. i. 1, 2. seeming to exalt and magnify God's speaking by his Son, and the way of this ministration above the ministration of the prophets (which ministration was first by him in the flesh, afterwards in Spirit, which is properly called the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8.). Now consider whether this sure word of prophecy from the excellent glory, so immediately from the majesty on high, was not intended by him as a seal to the faith of the disciples, as a seal to Christ's appearance in the flesh, and to what he had taught them (which was sometimes in parables, and not so fully understood by them); and whether this was not more bright, more ravishing, more certain, more establishing, than his common presence and appearance among them, and than the words which he from the Father, not the Father so immediately himself, spake to them? For that which is given to confirm a thing, is (in order of nature, and for evidence sake) more certain and clear than that which it is given to confirm.

Fifthly, Consider whether the voice of God's Spirit and light within in the heart be not more clear and certain to him that hears it, than any word or testimony from without? Is it not a surer word of prophecy than this relation or testimony of the apostles, of what they heard from the excellent glory? Yea, is it not surer than any testimony of the scriptures, or than all outward testimonies put together?

Sixthly, Consider whether they who are turned from darkness to the light, even to the inward manifestation of God's Holy Spirit, ought not to give diligent heed unto it, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in their hearts?

Lastly, Consider, what is the difference between this light shining (as a word of prophecy) in the dark place, and the day dawning, and the day-star arising in the heart? Is it not the same light, only further revealed and shining in its glory, in the holy and pure place?

The apostle Paul excellently openeth the thing, *Coloss. i. 25, 26, 27*. First, he speaketh of the Word in general, which he was to fulfil, or fully to preach. Then he sheweth how this Word is a mystery, hid in the Gentiles (for so the *Greek, ver. 27*. is) even in them that believe not; the Word is nigh there, the instruction and commandment of life nigh there. But

in those that receive the grace, and believe in the light, and so become children of the light, and walk in the light, as God is in the light: in them Christ is risen, and they are risen together with him, and he is in them the hope of glory. So that the day hath dawned there; the day-star hath risen, and they know not only a measure of Grace from Christ, but Christ himself arisen, dwelling, living, acting, walking in them, and they in him.

Let these things be duly considered of, and equally weighed in the holy balance, and then I dare appeal to every serious and sober heart and mind, whether the inward light, the inward Word, the Word nigh in the mouth and heart, and the holy living testimony thereof, the voice of the witness within, of the prophecy within, be not surer to that man that hath it, and hears and knows the voice of it, than any outward voice or testimony whatsoever?

Object. But some may object thus, or after this manner: I am satisfied that there is a Word nigh in the mouth and heart (to which Moses did direct the Jews, and the apostles the Christians), and that this Word doth enlighten the mind, and doth separate in the mouth between words and words, and is a swift witness against the bad words, and a justifier of the good words, which come from the truth and uprightness of the heart, and are seasoned with grace. I also believe that this Word is quick and powerful in the heart, separating and dividing between the thoughts and intents there; and that the testimony thereof is surer and clearer (as to the hearts in which it shines, and to them whose spiritual ears are opened to hear its voice) than any words and testimonies from without. And I am satisfied also, that they who are the sheep of Christ, do thus hear the shepherd's voice, and do know both the voice behind them, when it comes after them to reprove their wanderings, and direct their minds into the true way; and also the voice before them, when the Shepherd (who is the leader) putteth forth his sheep, and goeth before them, and they follow him; for they know his voice, John x. 4. Yea, I have had the experience hereof in my own heart: for I have felt that work within, and that living sweet testimony of God's Spirit in my own heart, which hath been more to me than all that ever I heard or read from without; so that I can truly say (with the Samaritans, John iv. 22.) Now I believe, not because of the testimonies or words I have heard from without, but from the evidence and demonstration of life, and of God's holy Spirit in my own heart. Nor can I see how the apostle Peter, in this place, can prefer the testimonies of the prophets (for that which is called the New Testament was not yet written and added to the old) before this glorious immediate testimony from God Almighty, which Christ was honoured with, and they were greatly honoured in being admitted to be beholders and witnesses of. Yet somewhat sticks with me; namely, those words of the apostle, ver. 20, 21. wherein he plainly seems to me to speak of the scriptures or writings of the prophets, as if they had been the more sure word of prophecy, which in this place he had directed to. For why should he say thus, Knowing this first, &c. unless he had intended the same

Word

Word of prophecy which he had been speaking of before, and directing their minds how they might make use of that Word of prophecy?

Ans. Peter was the minister of the circumcision, and he was to deal with people who were great admirers and studiers of the letter; therefore, though he, as well as Paul and John, and the other apostles (*Rom. x. and Acts xxvi. 18. and 1 John i.*) was to direct men to the Word within, and light within; yet he knew it was of great concernment to them rightly to read and be able to understand the letter without. Therefore, having first directed them to the Word of prophecy, to the path of the just, which is the inward shining light, to the light which shines more and more in the dark place to them that give heed to it; in the next place it was very proper, useful, and necessary to direct them how to read the scriptures aright. For indeed the oracles of God were given to them, *Rom. iii. 2.* and they ought to be diligent in the reading of them, that they might understand the holy prophecies and precious promises, &c. and reap the hope and comfort of them, and be made partakers of the divine nature, which is the thing promised. And not only to the Jews, but to the Christians gathered from among the Gentiles in that age, were the scriptures greatly useful: and so they are also to such as are gathered by the Holy Spirit and power of God in this age. The prophecies, the judgments, the promises, the mercies, the experience, &c. are all useful, and profitable to those that read and understand them in the light of God's Holy Spirit. But the first thing needful is, to turn a man's mind to the light, that he may have somewhat to guide him, somewhat to stay his mind upon in reading the scriptures, somewhat to open and unseal the holy and divine words and mysteries to him. For no man can truly and rightly understand the scriptures, but as his mind is opened by the Lord, and the understanding of words and things given him. So that this is exceeding necessary to be known (after a man is turned to the light and Word of prophecy within, and comes to read the outward oracles and testimonies of the Holy Spirit) that all the holy men spake not in their own wills, nor in the will of the flesh, nor in the will of man, but as the Spirit of God gave them words, and moved them to speak. And those words spoken by God's Spirit knoweth none, but that Spirit which spake them. So that no man ought to venture by his private spirit to undertake to open and interpret those words; but he must first receive the same Word of life, the same Spirit of prophecy within, and wait upon him, and learn to know his voice, who openeth what and when he pleaseth to the sons of men. And so when the same Word of life speaks in a man's heart now, shewing things to come, either concerning a man's self or others, that man must be careful to retire, and lie very low before the Lord, waiting upon him for the true understanding and right interpreting of his own words, else a man may easily misunderstand and misapply what was truly and rightly spoken. So that this is the right way of understanding the words of prophecy from the holy men of God in former ages, and the instructions of the

the Word of life in the heart. *The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear him.* In the true fear the ear is opened, and the right understanding given; but in the wisdom of the flesh, and in the confidence thereof, it is easy erring at any time from the true sense and right use of that which was opened and given by God, either for the soul's own good, or for the good of others.

To conclude this appeal: there is one consideration on my heart to propose to the serious and sober-minded; and oh! that they might rightly consider and understand it! David was a man after God's own heart, a wise man, an inwardly-exercised man, an experienced man, an holy, spiritual, heavenly man; a man who knew the inward everlasting kingdom, and had the Spirit of God, and witnessed his truth in the inward parts: can ye think that David did not know the Word and commandment of life within? Did not God write his law in his heart? How else could he become a man after God's own heart? Did not he witness the everlasting covenant, and the law thereof, the new law, the living law, even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Now when David said, *the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul*, what law did he mean? What is the law which converts the soul to God? Can any thing less than an inward power, an inward light, an inward law, an inward life, than the inward drawings and teachings of God's Spirit, convert the soul to God? And what testimony is that which makes wise the simple? Is it not the inward testimony? What made him wiser than the ancients, and his teachers, who knew and could teach the law outward? Were they not the inward teachings and inward precepts of God's Holy Spirit from the Word of life within, which doubtless was very nigh him, he being a man so exercised by God's Spirit, and so formed after his heart? And what are those right statutes which rejoice the heart, and the pure commandment which enlightens the eyes, and the clean fear and righteous judgments? Are not all these things known within, and received within? Doth not God put his fear within, in the heart? Doth not God reveal his righteous judgments within against sin and iniquity? Oh! how did David cry out because of God's dreadful judgments upon him for sin, and said his soul ran in the night, and he watered his couch with his tears! And in another place, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.* And when he speaketh so much (as in *Psal. cxix.*) of God's word, God's law, his testimonies, precepts, statutes, judgments, &c. what doth he speak of? Doth he speak of the outward or inward ministration of the Word in the heart? Doth he not speak of the inward writing, of the law in the heart, of the commandment in the heart, of the testimony of life there? For he had the testimony within, the Spirit within, the law within, the light within, the inward and spiritual kingdom (wherein the holy dominion of God is revealed) he knew within; and so believing, could speak of the power and glory thereof, and of God's wonderful works, *Psal. cxlv.* And when he said, *thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,* what

what Word did he mean? Did he mean the letter or law outward, or the Word nigh in the mouth and heart, which Moses had testified of, and directed the Jews to, and he himself had been very well acquainted with? When again he saith, *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?* And immediately giveth the answer, *By taking heed according to thy Word.* Doth he mean the letter without, or the Word within? What is it that cleanseth the heart, that cleanseth the way? Is it any thing less than the water of life, than the blood of the everlasting covenant, than the Word and life of truth within? *Sanctify them by thy truth; thy Word is truth.* In the sense of that inwardly, and obedience to it, is the renewing and sanctification felt. And so this brings to be undefiled in the way, and to keep the testimonies of life, and preserves from doing iniquity. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, saith he, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity, &c.* Had he no experience of these things himself? Yea, surely. He knew the holy heart, the pure heart, the new and heavenly image, the heart after God's own heart; and he knew what it was to walk in innocency, and to be kept out of sin. Hear what he himself saith, *Psal. xviii. 21, &c. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.* What was that? Was not that it which had most power over him, and was most apt to entangle and ensnare him? Now he that arrives here, he that doth this, that keeps himself from his iniquity, doubtless witnesseth great power and victory over lesser and smaller sins. Was not David strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? Did not the Word of God abide in him? Did not he overcome the wicked-one by the power thereof? How else could he walk thus in the ways of the Lord, as he expresseth, and keep himself from his iniquity?

Now this Word of life, these living testimonies and precepts, yea, the everlasting ordinances and statutes of the new covenant, with the sure mercies of David, which Word Moses had testified of, and directed to, and David had experienced (it being the pearl he had treasured up and hid in his heart) and which was the Word of faith which Paul and the other apostles preached and testified of, turning men from darkness to this inward light; I say, this Word, this living Word (and the inward ministration thereof) God hath revealed and made manifest in this our day, and hath turned the minds of many to it, and is daily inviting men to Shiloh's streams, to the living waters, to the light and habitation of the living. Blessed are they that hear the joyful sound, and come to the holy mount and city of our God, where life lives and reigns, and is fed on by all the living; who are God's elect, God's heritage, God's vineyard of red wine, God's inclosed garden, whom he watcheth over night and day, and watereth every moment; and in whom he dwelleth and walketh, and is to them a God and Father, and maketh

maketh them daily sensible that they are his servants, children, and spouse, in whom is his great delight, and on whose hearts and foreheads is written *Holiness to the Lord*. Yea, and the Lord will bless thee for ever, *O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness!* and every tongue that riseth up in judgment against thee will the Lord God condemn for evermore. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, whom the Lord hath gathered by the arm of his mighty power (inwardly revealed and stretched forth in them, and for them), *and their righteousness is of me*, saith the Lord.

P O S T S C R I P T.

There is a Scripture now openeth in me, as it hath often done, and it hath been very sweet to my taste; but I have not had freedom to give it forth to others, as at this time it is with me to do: it is that scripture *Rom. ix. 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

NOW many apprehend from this scripture, as I also formerly did, that God hath chosen out a certain number of persons on whom he will have mercy, and save by Jesus Christ the Lord; and that he hath passed over the rest, so that they were never intended to have any benefit by Christ's death as to their eternal salvation. This the wisdom of man, from the letter of the scripture and many other places, may easily apprehend and strongly reason for. But as the Lord openeth the mind, and men come to a sense of his nature and Spirit, and his intent in sending his Son, and receive the key which openeth the truth as it is in Jesus, they will easily see that this is contrary to God's nature, and his intent in sending his Son, and the universal covenant of light and life, and the manifest testimony of the scriptures.

First, As touching the nature of God. His nature is *love*; love to all his creatures. He would not have it go ill with any of them. He needeth not their misery to make himself happy. His nature is to love, to bless, to save; not to destroy or cut off, nor to afflict or grieve the children of men; not to hurt either the body or soul of any: he preserveth man and beast, *Psal. xxxvi. 6.*

Secondly, As touching his sending his Son. He sent him in his love to mankind, to save mankind. His love was not to a few only; but he loved all his creatures, he loved all lost souls, and he sent his Son to save them all. He gave him light to enlighten them all, and he gave him life to quicken them all; only he dispenseth this in different ways, according to the infinite wisdom and good pleasure of his Father.

So that, Thirdly, The covenant of light and life is universal, and nigh all mankind, by which the darkeſt parts and corners of the earth are at ſome times enlightened, and feel ſomewhat of the quickening life. For the life is the light of men, and the light comes from the life, and is a quick, piercing, quickening light, conveying warmth and life, yea, living virtue into the darkeſt hearts, as it moves and finds entertainment in them.

Laſtly, As for the teſtimony of the Scriptures, it is very clear that God would have none to periſh. *All ſouls are mine*, ſaith the Lord, *Ezek. xviii.* 4. *I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth*, ver. 32. And again, *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked*, chap. xxxiii. 11. I have ſent my light to enlighten all men, and turn all men, and I would have all men receive it, and be turned by it. I have ſhewed every man what is good, and what I the Lord require of him; and I would have every man answer the manifeſtation of my light and Spirit in him. Do ye not read God's charge againſt the whole earth, *Iſai. xxiv. 5.* that they had tranſgreſſed the law, changed the ordinance, broken the everlaſting covenant? Why then they all had the law, had the ordinance, had the everlaſting covenant; and for this cauſe it is that the curſe and judgment comes upon them, ver. 6. So that this was the condemnation from the beginning, and this is the condemnation ſtill, *that light is come into the world, and men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil.* Men are not condemned for want of light from Chriſt Jeſus; but becauſe they do not believe in, and obey that light which they have from him; becauſe they believe in the darkneſs, believe in the dark ſpirit, believe in the dark power, which riſeth up againſt the miniſtration of light in the heart, and do not believe in that which is given of God to diſcover and work it out. What ſhould I multiply ſcriptures for? That common ſcripture is abſolutely undeniable (as the Lord opens the heart unto the ſimplicity of truth, and keeps it out of the ſubtil enchanting wiſdom) *John iii. 16, 17.* *For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world, through him, might be ſaved.* What can be more naked and plain than theſe words of Chriſt, who knew the very heart of God in this particular, and plainly declares what it is, even not to condemn, not to deſtroy, but to ſave men from condemnation and deſtruction? And would Chriſt have ſo affectionately wept over *Jeruſalem*, had he known it to be his Father's will and determinate counſel that they ſhould have periſhed, and not have been gathered and ſaved by him? I ſhall add but one place more, where the apoſtle (who knew God's counſel, and underſtood the myſtery of election and reprobation, and had the mind of Chriſt) ſaith expreſſly, that *God will have all men to be ſaved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4. What words can be ſpoken more plain and full? And let people mind that theſe words are far plainer and eaſier to be underſtood than thoſe ſcriptures which treat of election and

reprobation; which is a deep mystery; and men must come to a growth in the truth, before they can receive that capacity which is necessary towards the understanding of them. But to open the thing a little, as it is now in my heart.

There hath been a three-fold dispensation of God to mankind. A dispensation of the law to the Jews; a dispensation of the gospel (or promise, which was as well before the law as after it) to the called Jews and Gentiles; and a secret hidden dispensation of the mystery of grace, of the mystery of life and salvation, which the apostle calls the mystery hid in the Gentiles, *Coloss. i. 27.* For somewhat of God, somewhat of the nature and Spirit of Christ, the souls of all mankind have had near them, to enlighten them, and to turn them from Satan's power to God; though it hath not been a thing known to them, but a mystery hid in them.

Now that God did cast off any Jew under the law, or any whom he visits with the grace and power of the gospel, from a mere absolute will in himself, because he would destroy them and have them perish, to shew forth the praise of his justice, and his absolute sovereignty, this the true sense of life in me denies; but all have a visit of that which saves heartily and in true good-will from God; and he that is turned to that which God hath sent to turn him, shall be owned and saved thereby. He that believeth in the truth, in the light, in the Word nigh, even in the very lowest appearance of it (for the lowest appearance is the same thing in nature with the highest, and the grace is saving in its very lowest appearance, as well as in its highest) shall be saved thereby.

Now mark: God's grace, God's mercy, God's love, God's light, God's Spirit, God's power, &c. is his own, and he may do with his own what he pleaseth. Now it being by this that he strives, converts, and saves; and it being in his own will and good pleasure how long he will strive and contend to save; it lieth therefore absolutely in him, even in his own will, what he will do in this kind. He may take advantage against rebellious man, and cut him off when he will; and again, he may strive and raise true sense in a man's heart, and give repentance, and pardon his transgressions, as long as he pleaseth; yea, he may so change a man's heart, and so create him a-new in Christ Jesus, and so bring him into unity with the pure seed, and to that estate in the seed, as that he may have assurance he shall never be utterly cast off; but that though he should sin, and transgress the holy law of God's Spirit, his iniquity shall be chastised with stripes, and his soul recovered and brought back thereby, but not utterly rejected by the Lord. Now it being thus, hath not God mercy on whom he will? And doth not he harden as he pleaseth? Did not God give up the Jews to hardness, after much striving with them? Did not God give up the Gentiles to hardness, and to vain imaginations concerning the true God, after they had rejected a measure of the true knowledge? *Rom. i. 21.* Have not the vessels of wrath, who are fitted to destruction, a day of much long-suffering first? *Rom. ix. 22.* Had not the

the old world, who were fitted for that destruction of the flood, a long day of patience and forbearance from God, his Spirit reprovng of them, and striving with them? To what end did God forbear them, and cause his Spirit to strive with them? Was it not to lead them to repentance, that thereby they might have avoided that destruction, which, by their rebellion and stiffness of spirit against God's good and tender Spirit, they were fitted for, and exposed to? See *Rom. ii. 4.* So for Cain, how tenderly did God deal with him! how uprightly did God seek his good! Would not God have had him come to a true sense and repentance? Would not God have had him believed and offered in the faith, and been accepted as his brother was? And for Pharaoh, God indeed was against that nature and spirit in him which oppressed Israel; but would not the Lord have had him denied and turned from that nature and spirit, and let Israel go? God would have no man do evil, and bring upon themselves destruction; though in his just judgment he is many times provoked to give men up to that which leadeth into and hardeneth in evil. So not only Pharaoh, but Israel also, was given up to their own hearts lusts, when they would none of the Lord, nor hearken to his counsel, *Psal. lxxxi. 12.* But saith the Lord, oh! that it had been otherwise! *Oh! that my people had bearkened unto me! &c.* it should then have been otherwise with them, *ver. 13, &c.*

So that God of himself doth not desire the destruction of his creature; nor doth he desire to harden them, or to give them up to a deluding Spirit, that they might be damned; but men first refuse the truth, and turn from it, or let it go; not receiving it in the love of it, or not liking to retain the knowledge of it (which is death to the man's corrupt nature, spirit, will, and wisdom, and such a cross and yoke as he is in no-wise willing to bear); and then the Lord, in his just judgment, gives them up to the deceitfulness of sin, to be hardened by it. Now this liveth in God's own breast when and to whom to do it, according to his own will, and according to his own wisdom and counsel; so that it may be truly and properly said, *he hath mercy and compassion on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth.* But that God hath determined to harden any, without giving them a day of mercy; or that it is God's will and determinate counsel that men should reject the day of his mercy and precious invitation, that they might be hardened by him and perish; this is not God's truth, but men's misapprehensions upon true words, gathering meanings therefrom in their own wisdom, and not waiting upon God till he cause the true light to shine in them, and thereby give them the true knowledge and understanding.

Therefore, since there is such mercy in God towards all, and he hath given all men a day of visitation, greater or lesser; yea, since of late he hath caused his light to shine forth, and given this age such a visitation as many ages have not had, oh! let men take heed how they close their eyes, stop their ears, and harden their hearts against it, lest they provoke God to give them up to their own imaginary, conceited, fleshly comprehensive

knowledge of the letter, and so seal them up in that hardness of heart and deafness of spirit which they first gave themselves up to. For the letter, without the Spirit, killeth; and so doth all literal knowledge: and there needs no greater curse from God (it will sufficiently avenge the cause of his reproached light, and holy covenant of life in Christ Jesus, now abundantly revealed and made manifest) than to close mens eyes, and stop their ears, and harden their hearts (in their literal knowledges and practices) from beholding and partaking of the precious life and virtue of the holy and living ministration in Christ Jesus the Lord, wherewith God visiteth and redeemeth his people.

Indeed the physician is come inwardly and spiritually, and he inwardly heals and restoreth his people, faithfully seeking after the sick, the distressed, the broken, the wounded; pouring oil into their wounds, and healing them. But there are some who are so sound and whole in their notional apprehensions and practices, that they have no need of the physician, and them the physician passeth by, as unworthy of him, and whom he intendeth shall have no share with him. *Ephraim is joined to idols* (he is well, he hath enough, he hath no need of me) *let him alone*, saith the Lord. I will pour out the choice virtue of my spiritual life and redeeming power among my gathered sheep and lambs, who have need thereof, and will rejoice therein. These will know my voice; these will justify the appearance of my Spirit and power; these love the savour of my anointing and precious ointment, which runs down from the head upon all the living body, and these shall have it. These understand how I have mercy on whom I will, and whom I will I harden; and it is my will to have mercy on these my once-greatly-distressed-ones, and to destroy (inwardly to destroy, oh! who knows what that means!) the fat and the strong, and to feed them with judgment. Oh! that men did know to whom the mercy and to whom the judgment belongs! To the wisdom of the flesh, to the wise comprehenders of the things of God after the flesh, is the judgment: to the poor, to the distressed, to the broken in spirit (not to them that are at ease in their literal knowledge, but to the mourners in Sion after the holy God, and his living power and righteousness) is the everlasting gospel, the mercy, the love, the peace, the binding-up, the redemption which is by Christ Jesus, the living minister in the holy sanctuary of our God.

NAKED TRUTH:

O R,

TRUTH nakedly manifesting itself,

IN SEVERAL PARTICULARS,

For the Removing of Hindrances out of the
Way of the SIMPLE-HEARTED,

THAT THEY MAY

Come to true Knowledge, Life, Liberty, Peace, and
Joy in the LORD, through the Virtue and Power of
his precious Truth revealed and working in them.

Given forth by Way of

QUESTION and ANSWER.

Whereunto are added,

Some EXPERIENCES, with some SCRIPTURES, very sweet, and
necessary to be experienced in the Gospel-State.

A S A L S O,

A few Words concerning the TRUE CHRIST;

A N D

A few Words in the Bowels of tender Love and Good-will to my
NATIVE COUNTRY.

By a long Mourner and Traveller after, but at length an happy Experiencer
of, the Truth, as it is in Jesus,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see. LUKE X. 23.

P R E A C E.



TRUE knowledge and true experience, especially concerning things of necessity, and great concern to the soul, is very precious. As, to know the true foundation, the corner-stone, which God lays in his spiritual Sion; and the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of all that are born of God; and the gathering out of the spirit of this world (with the vanity and fallshood thereof) into God's Spirit, which is truth and no lye; and the building up of the holy temple, in which God appears, and is worshipped; and the heavenly communion with the Father and Son, in the one pure light which shines from them into the heart, and the one faith, the one circumcision, the one baptism, the one holy mountain, the one feast of fat things made thereon; the one water of life, the one bread, the one cup of salvation, &c.

Now the things of the kingdom are all at the disposal of the king thereof. To him all power is given, in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; he hath life in himself, and he hath life to dispose of, and dispense to his. He gives the true knowledge, which is life eternal; he gives repentance, and remission of sins. He teacheth to believe in the Father, and he giveth faith also. He is the Shepherd of the sheep, who by his voice quickeneth, and maketh alive, and leadeth, and preserveth, and nourisheth up to life eternal. Therefore, whoever will understand aright, must receive understanding from him; and whoever will repent aright, must receive repentance from him; and whoever will believe aright, must receive faith from him; and whoever will hear and see aright, must receive an ear and eye from him; and whoever will come unto him, and receive him, must witness that new heart forming or formed in him, where-with and whereby he is received. Men greatly mistake and err about the gospel knowledge and religion, by beginning therein without the gospel-spirit and power.

There-

Therefore that man that would not be deceived, and lose his soul for ever, let him take heed how he begins, how he stands, and how he proceeds in his religion. The Jews stood in the revelation of God's Spirit and power outwardly; and the state of the Christians, the new-covenant state, stands in the revelation of God's Spirit and power inwardly: for none can beget a new-birth to God inwardly, but his own Spirit and power working inwardly in the heart.

Therefore, thou that wouldst live with God for ever, and not perish from the presence and glory of his power, mind these three things:

First, God's inward visiting thee, and making a real change in thee. I do not mean a change in thy mind from one notion to another; but a change in thy heart from one nature and spirit to another. This is the great work, which nothing but the mighty power of God, which raised Jesus from the dead, can effect in the hearts of the children of men. Now that this may be wrought out in thee, wait for the appearing and working of that power, which (by its appearing and working) doth effect it daily more and more in those that unite to it, and give up to its operations. Oh! wait to feel the power begetting somewhat of its own nature in thee, leavening thee into its nature by the pure heavenly leaven wherewith God waits to leaven thy heart! Thus feel thy beginning from the true root, from the holy principle, from the seed of the kingdom; and then wait to feel that grow up in thee, and to grow up therefrom, that as the beginning is pure, so the growth may be pure also. For after God hath visited thee, and begotten somewhat in thee, and leavened thee in some measure, so that there is true life, true sense, true hungerings, true breathings after the Lord and his righteousness, after the fountain of living waters, then (in the next place) mind and wait to learn of the true teacher how to come to the true waters, that thou mayest drink thereof, and of no dirty puddle, of thy own or any other's forming. Where are these waters dispensed, and where are they to be found? Why in the new covenant, which God makes with the hungry and thirsty souls, as they come to the Shepherd, and hear his voice, and learn of him, and follow him. Therefore thou must wait to distinguish spirits, and the knocks of spirits in thy own heart. Thou must know when the Shepherd knocks, and when the stranger knocks; and let in the Shepherd when he knocks, and not let in the stranger when he knocks. Thus, by knowing him, inclining thine ear to him, and hearing his voice, thou comest to have the everlasting covenant made with thy soul, even the sure mercies of David, wherein the union with God is sure, the teacher sure, never more to be removed from thee; the fear which God puts into the heart sure; the law of the new life sure, being so written in thy heart by the finger of God's Spirit as none can blot out; the love of God sure, his preservation sure, the inheritance of life sure. O sweet covenant! O holy covenant! O blessed covenant! and blessed are all those souls with whom

whom God makes this covenant, and who are kept by him in the sense and enjoyment of it!

Now, lastly, after God hath made this covenant with thee, and spoken peace to thee, and given thee of the power, righteousness, and joy of the kingdom, and set the holy hedge of his power and wall of salvation about thee, thou must take heed of going forth after any lust, after any desire of the flesh, after any temptation of the enemy; thou must keep within the holy limits, and not touch any dead or unclean thing, lest thou be defiled, and so in degree separated from him who is pure.

The occasion of what follows was briefly thus:

There was a controversy between me and another about many of these things, towards whom my love was in a travail; and having a sense on my heart that the enemy makes use of the wrong apprehensions and mistakes he begets in mens minds about these things, contrary to the true knowledge and experience which God giveth to the children which are born of the heavenly womb, who indeed alone can rightly plead for and justify their mother, in this day of great strife and contention about the kingdom, and the right heir thereof; I say, having this sense on my heart, and these things naturally springing up and opening in me upon this occasion, I was drawn in love, and in the motion of life, thus to give them forth to others, hoping that the Lord may thereby open the minds of some towards, and confirm the minds of others in, the sense and belief of the truth, and the inward manifestation of his Spirit, which discovers and strives against the darkness, lusts, and corruptions in them. The Lord give people the sense of the strivings and reproofs of his Holy Spirit inwardly in their hearts, and join their spirits thereto, that they may receive light, life, virtue, and strength from his Holy Spirit, and thereby witness the overcoming and keeping under the enemy of their souls, that they may know what it is to have the seed of the woman bruise the serpent's head in their own particulars, that so the holy child Jesus may be exalted (his horn exalted in them) and he may reign, and exercise his government in them, and they may become kings and priests to God, and reign in him over all that his power is ordained to break and keep under, yea, utterly consume and destroy, in the hearts of those that submit themselves willingly to him, and walk in the light and leadings of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

NAKED TRUTH.

Given forth by Way of

QUESTION and ANSWER.

I. Concerning understanding the Holy Scriptures truly and aright.

Quest. **W**HETHER the scriptures can be understood aright, without the light of God's Holy Spirit shining inwardly in the heart, and giving the true understanding of them?

Ans. No; not possibly. For as the outward eye cannot possibly see without the shining of some outward light, no more can the inward eye see without the shining of the inward light. God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, causeth the light of his Spirit to shine in the hearts of people according to his holy pleasure, and thereby they come to see. God teacheth all things in his own light, in the light of his pure eternal Spirit; and in his light do the children of light see light. The things of God's kingdom are holy mysteries, and the words which he speaks concerning those holy mysteries none can understand, but as he pleaseth to open and reveal them. He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, 1 John v. 20. *The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding*, (Job xxxii. 8.) without which, man is dead, and can neither hear, nor see, nor understand any of the things of God's kingdom.

II. Concerning the illuminating Spirit, and sanctifying Spirit.

Quest. *Whether the illuminating and sanctifying Spirit be one and the same Spirit or no? because it is affirmed by some (and written by one to me as a sound distinction of divines, which distinction he saith he hath a mind I should learn) that there is a Spirit of sanctification, and that is peculiar to the godly; and*

there is a Spirit illuminating, and that is oft vouchsafed to the wicked, as it was to Balaam.

Answ. The Spirit which illuminateth, and the Spirit which sanctifieth, is one and the same Spirit; and the illumination of the Spirit is in order unto sanctification. The same light which discovereth the darkness, also chaseth away the darkness, as it is received and subjected to, and purifieth the mind; for the light hath not only a property of enlightening, but also of cleansing and sanctifying. And the reason why men are not changed, justified, and sanctified, in and by the light, is because they love it not, and bring not their hearts and deeds to it; and so it is their reprovcr and condemner, and not their justifier and sanctifier. But the same Spirit, light, and life which enlighteneth, also sanctifieth, and there is not another.

III. *Concerning the Holy Spirit of God, and the Holy Scriptures*

Quest. *Whether they be always joined; or some may have the Spirit, who have not the scriptures; and some may have the scriptures who have not the Spirit?*

Answ. The Holy Spirit of God, and the holy scriptures, are not always joined together; for some in the dark corners of the earth may be visited by the Spirit, become sensible of the Spirit, and receive the Spirit, who never heard of the scriptures; and many may have the scriptures, and yet be very ignorant of, and strangers to, God's Holy Spirit; as the Jews were, who had them read in their synagogues every sabbath-day, and yet Christ told them, *Ye neither know the scriptures, nor the power of God.*

IV. *Concerning the Law of the Lord, which is perfect, and which converts the Soul.*

Quest. *What is the law of the Lord, which is perfect, and converts the soul? Is it the outward law or writing in the letter, or the inward law and writing in the Spirit?*

Answ. No man is, or ever was, or ever can be, converted to God from the inward law of sin and death, but by the inward law of life and righteousness written in the heart; and I am sure that law is perfect, the new covenant is perfect, and the law thereof perfect; the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus perfect, which converts the mind to Christ, the righteousness of God, and sets it free from the law of sin and death. And David was a spiritual man, and knew the inward covenant, and the inward creating of the heart anew, and God's holy and free Spirit, and the law and testimony thereof. I will grant a great deal to the letter and ministration outward; but I must attribute more to the inward; or else God's light, and the holy experience which he hath given me, will condemn me. And as the Jew outward had the law, and testimony, and statutes outward; so I am sure the

the true Jew, the Jew inward, hath the law, and testimony, and statutes inward, written in his heart by the finger of God's Spirit; yea, and the same Spirit put within him, to cause him to keep this law, and the holy testimony, statutes, and judgments of the Lord; and the spiritual Jacob, and Israel of God, in this the day of their redemption and salvation from on high, do follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, and walk in the light of the Lord,

V. *Concerning David's Longings, expressed in Psal. xlii. xliii. cxix. and other Places.*

Quest. *Were David's longings more after the law outward, or after the law and light of God's Spirit inward?*

Ans. David was a man after God's own heart; a man that knew an inward and clean heart of God's creating, and knew the free Spirit of the Lord, and the fresh springing life thereof, and the leadings of the pure living truth inwardly in his heart, and this was it he most especially prized and longed after. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me, &c.* saith he (Psal. li. 10, 11.) after his fall, shewing what he had been acquainted with before, and what he now (God having touched his spirit afresh) began to long after again. And saith he, in another place, *Oh! send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy hill, and to thy tabernacles,* Psal. xliii. 3. Oh! the sweetness of light within, truth within! Oh! the precious leadings and drawings thereof, which were once felt, upon a fresh and tender remembrance thereof, cannot but be longed after again!

VI. *Concerning the Sun, or Fountain of spiritual Light.*

Quest. *Whether the holy scriptures, or written testimonies, be the sun or fountain, and the light within but a ray or stream from them? (as is affirmed by my antagonist).*

Ans. It is just quite contrary: for the holy men spake the holy words from the inward light and quickening life of God's Spirit within them; so that that was the fountain in them, and is so still. *With thee is the fountain of life; and he that believeth, as the scriptures have said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit* (John vii. 39.) that is the fountain. *The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life,* John iv. 14. Who esteems and honours the scriptures aright? He that believes their testimony, comes to Christ, and makes his Spirit, light, and life all; or he that sets the scriptures in the stead of that Word of life which they came from, testify of, and point men to, as the fountain and foundation of life and salvation to all mankind?

VII. *Concerning the Word's being a Fire and a Hammer, to burn up the Chaff, and break the Rocks in Pieces.*

Quest. Is the Word, which is a fire and hammer, the testimonies and declarations of the holy scriptures without, or the Word nigh in the mouth and heart?

Ans. That which I have felt hammering inwardly, that which I have felt burning inwardly (unquenchably, as the mind has been kept to it) has been the Word of life itself, from which the good words and holy testimonies proceed. That which does the work in the inward Jew, is the inward ministration of the inward covenant, the appearance of God there: he is the consuming fire; he is the Spirit of judgment and burning, who, by his holy flamings inwardly, burns up the filth of the daughter of Sion. A man may be exercised in the letter all his days, and yet witness nothing of this inwardly in truth and righteousness; but he whom the Spirit of judgment and burning inwardly comes nigh, and whose flesh is kept in that holy furnace, it will be consumed there day by day, until it be quite wasted and destroyed, and so he come to be judged according to the flesh, and to live to God in the Spirit.

VIII. *Concerning God's writing his Law in the Heart.*

Quest. How doth God write his law in the heart?

Ans. By his Spirit and power working there, whereby he both creates a new heart, and writes the new law, even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, in the new heart. *The isles shall wait for his law.* Whole law? The law of the Messiah, the law of grace, which gives dominion; the law of the anointing, the law of the new-birth, the law of the holy seed. *His seed remaineth in him,* 1 John iii. 9. In that seed is the new nature, and the new law both. What is the law of sin? What is the law of death? How is it written in the heart? How doth the enemy write it there, but by his corrupt spirit and nature? And doth not God, by his holy Spirit and nature, write the new law, the law of life, in the hearts of those that are renewed and made tender to the impressions of his holy quickening power? Every motion and drawing whereof is a law to them who are born of the Spirit, and taught of God to eye and walk after the quickening Spirit.

IX. *Concerning the inward Light of God's Spirit.*

Quest. What is it which the mind is to be turned to, to enlighten it, and to work the darkness and corruption out of it?

Ans. It is no less than the light of God's Spirit; nothing else can do it. The day-spring must arise from on high in the heart, or there will be night for ever there. All notions or apprehensions concerning the light will not do it;

it; it is the shining of the light alone inwardly which is able to expel the darkness there. It was not for nothing that Christ came a light to enlighten men, and directed men to follow him the light, that they might not abide in darkness, and that he sent his apostles with this message, that *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*; and so gave his apostles wisdom, authority, and power to turn men from the darkness to the light. And if the darkness was within, which they were to be turned from, surely the light must shine within, to discover the darkness, and to that light must they be turned. And in this light the Holy Spirit is received, and dwells there; but out of this light, and the limits thereof, in every heart, dwells the unclean and dark spirit, and hath power and rule there; for nothing but the light and strength of God's Spirit is able to break his kingdom and dominion inwardly in the heart.

X. Concerning the Ministers and Ministry of the Gospel.

Quest. Who are the ministers, and what is the ministry of the gospel?

Ans. They are the ministers of the gospel who have received the Spirit and power wherein the ministry of the gospel stands. For Christ came in the Spirit and power of the Father, and he sends his apostles and ministers in the same Spirit and power, that they might be able to beget, and reach to that birth which is to be begotten and ministered to. It is one thing to be a minister of the law, and to minister letter; and another thing to be a minister of the gospel, and to minister Spirit. The apostles were able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; and so are all in a degree, who succeed them in any measure or proportion of their ministry. For the ministry of the gospel is in the light, Spirit, and power of the Most High, to turn peoples minds to a proportion of the same light, Spirit, and power in themselves, and so to come to the manifestation and quickening of the same life in themselves, that so they may walk in the same light. For the life is the light; and he can never have light, or see light, who comes not first to feel some virtue from the quickening power. Oh! how precious is this ministry! Blessed be the Lord for his renewing of it in these our days! And this ministry is not to be confined to an outward order of men, as the ministry of the law was; but whoever hath received the gift, so he is to minister, as the Lord guides, leads, and orders him in the use of that gift which he hath bestowed upon him for that end. And what if he be an herdsman, a fisherman, a tent-maker, or the like? Yet if God hath poured out his Spirit upon him, and openeth his mouth, he hath not only liberty, but more, even authority, from the Lord God Almighty to speak in his name, either for turning men unto Christ, the light and life of men, or for building men up in their holy faith in him, whose Spirit and power was and is the resurrection in the life for evermore.

XI. Concerning trying of Spirits, and searching the Heart.

Quest. What is it which searcheth the heart, and infallibly tries spirits?

Answ. God's Spirit, God's word nigh in the heart and mouth, separateth and giveth true discerning and judgment there, to all whose ears are circumcised and inclined to it. God's Spirit is the spirit of judgment; and where he is given, the Spirit of judgment is given, and he judgeth in his children by the quickening life and sense he bestoweth on them, which distinguisheth between life and death, between truth and deceit; yea, between the same words, when they come from the dead spirit, and when they are spoken in his living power: Christ gives his Spirit to his sheep, which gives them to know his voice, to know when life speaks, and when words are living, and food for the living; and in what mouth they are dead, and cannot yield living nourishment.

XII. Concerning things necessary to Salvation.

Quest. Whether all things necessary to salvation be contained in the scriptures?

Answ. The scriptures give testimony concerning the one thing necessary to salvation; but the thing itself, Christ himself, the seed itself, is not contained in the scriptures, but revealed in the shinings of the true light, and so received or rejected inwardly in the heart. *Behold I stand at the door and knock.* Blessed are they that hear his voice, and believe him knocking, and open to him, and receive him, who gives eternal life and power to become sons of God to as many as receive him, and believe in, and give up to, the inward revealings of his redeeming arm and power therein. *To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* To them in whom, and to whom, this arm is revealed, Christ is revealed; and they in whom, and to whom, Christ is revealed, know the one thing necessary, even him who is life eternal, in whom all other necessary things are wrapped up, and by whom they are conveyed to the soul, according to its need, by him who is faithful in all his house, and takes care of every sheep which the Father committeth to him.

XIII. Concerning the true Gospel-Church, or Society.

Quest. What is the true gospel-church, or society?

Answ. A company of true believers in the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. A company of true Jews, inward Jews, Jews in Spirit, of the true circumcision, whom the Father hath sought out, and made true inward worshippers; such as are gathered to the name, and gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through him. A company of living stones, who have received life from him, the foundation-

foundation-stone; and meet together to wait upon, and worship the Father, in the light and Spirit which they have received from him. This is the holy church, or living assembly of the New Testament; blessed are they that are of it! For about this church is the wall of salvation; and they that are added by God's Spirit and power to this church, and abide in it, shall certainly be saved.

XIV. *Concerning the Way to Salvation.*

Quest. Which is the certain and infallible way to salvation?

Ans. It is a new and living way; it is such a way as none but the living can walk in. It is an holy way, which none but the cleansed, the ransomed, the redeemed of the Lord, can set one step in. The way, the life, and the truth are all one; blessed are they that find it, and walk in it! In plain and express terms, it is the Lord Jesus, the light of the Lord Jesus, the life of the Lord Jesus, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, the truth as it is in him, his wisdom, his power, he himself, the covenant or holy limit between God and the soul. He that comes into him, comes into the way; he that abides in him, abides in the way; he that walks in him, walks in the way. He that comes to his light, his life, his Spirit, his truth in the inward parts, comes to him; he that abides therein, abides in him; he that walks therein, walks in him: and he that walks out of the light and leadings of his Spirit, let him walk in what form he will, yet he walks not in him the way.

XV. *Concerning Christ's saving the Soul.*

Quest. How doth Christ save the soul?

Ans. By visiting inwardly, knocking inwardly, appearing inwardly, causing the light of life to shine inwardly, and so enlightening and quickening inwardly, breaking the strength of the enemy inwardly, and bringing out of the region and shadow of darkness inwardly, into the region and path of light. By the light and power of his Spirit he begets a child of light; which child of light he brings out of Egypt, the dark land; out of Sodom, the filthy unclean land; out of Babylon, the land and city of confusion (where the Spirit of the living God, and the holy order of life, and his precious government in the heart, is not so much as known), and brings him into the light, where he and his Father dwells. And this child of light is not of the nature of darkness, but light in the Lord, and walks in the light, as he is in the light; and by the further shining and working of the light and life in him, he preserves and saves him daily more and more.

XVI. *Concerning Regeneration, or the New-Birth.*

Quest. What is regeneration, or the new-birth?

Answ. It is an inward change, by the Spirit and power of the living God, into his own nature. It is a being begotten of his Spirit, born of his Spirit; begotten into, and born of the very nature of his Spirit. (*That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*, John iii.) It is not every change of mind which is the right change; but only that which God, by the very same power wherewith he raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave, makes in the hearts of those whom he visits; who are sensible of, receive, and are subject to his inward life, light, and power.

XVII. *Concerning true Holiness.*

Quest. What is true holiness?

Answ. That holy nature, and those holy actions, which arise from the holy root; all else are but imitations of holiness, not the true holiness. The tree must be made good first, and then the fruit will be good also. There are many likenesses of the true holiness up and down in several professions; but there is no real holiness to be found, nor righteousness neither, but in the trees of God's planting, in the branches which are by him ingrafted into the true vine and olive-tree, whose strength of virtue and holiness lies in the sap, which they daily receive from him.

XVIII. *Concerning Christ's Works outwardly in the Days of his Flesh, and inwardly in the Day and inward Shining of the Light of his Spirit in the Heart.*

Quest. Which are greater, the works which Christ did outwardly on the bodies of men in the days of his flesh, or which he doth inwardly in mens minds and spirits by the powerful appearance and operation of his Spirit? Because Christ said, the works that he did, those that believed on him should do, and greater also, because he went to the Father, John xiv. 12.

Answ. Doubtless to reach to the soul, and quicken the soul, and raise the soul out of the grave of death, and cure the blindness, deafness, hardness, and diseases of the soul, is greater than the outward, and was signified by the outward.

XIX. *Concerning the Yoke, or Cross of Christ.*

Quest. What is the yoke or cross of Christ?

Answ. It is inward, as that which is to be crucified is chiefly inward. It is that gift of God, that light of his Spirit, which is contrary to the darkness,

ness, contrary to all that is corrupt; which wills and wars against it; and being received, subjected to, and borne patiently, takes away the life of the flesh, the will and wisdom of the flesh, and all the subtil reasonings and devices of the fleshly part; and so that languishes and dies, and God's plant is eased of it; and the soul abiding under this cross, comes into the true, pure, and perfect liberty, where it hath scope unto holiness, freedom unto righteousness, and is in strait bonds and holy chains from all liberty to the flesh, and from all unholiness and unrighteousness of every kind.

XX. Concerning making our Calling and Election sure.

Quest. How may a man make his calling and election sure?

Ans. By making the gift of God sure to him; by making that sure to him wherein his calling and election is. For the choice is of the seed, the holy seed, the inward seed, the seed of God's Spirit, and of the creature as joined to the seed, God would have none to perish; but would have all come to the knowledge of Christ the truth, who is the seed, in whom the election stands: and his holy advice to men is, whom he begins to call and to lead towards the election, *to make their calling and election sure.* So that the way of making the calling and election sure is, to make the gift sure, the seed sure, the leaven sure, the pearl sure, which God will never reject, nor any that are found in true union with it, and in the love and obedience of it. Oh! therefore, as God visits with power (with his powerful gift) and as thou receivest power, dominion, and authority over sin (for in this gift is God's dominion and authority revealed) be faithful to the gift, be faithful to the power, give up to the truth in the inward parts, come into it, dwell in it, that thou mayst feel its virtue and delivering nature from every enslaving and embondaging thing, and then stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ the Lord (by the life, virtue, and power of his truth) sets thee free. And so here thou wilt read thy calling, and read thy election day by day; and find them sealed, and sure to thee, in that truth, in that gift, in that heavenly light, in that holy seed, which came from God, and is of him, and which he delights to own, and will never reject.

XXI. Concerning Prayer.

Quest. What is the true prayer?

Ans. The breathings which arise from the true birth, from the living sense which God gives to the true birth; these are the true prayer. There is a Spirit of prayer and supplication given by God to his children to wrestle and prevail with him by. All prayer that arises from, and is given by, that Spirit, is true prayer; all other prayer is not right and true, but at best but an imitation of the true. *We know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Mark: the very groanings that come from God's Spirit, from his breathing and work upon the heart, are right prayers in God's sight; but other sighs and groans are not so.

XXII. *Concerning Repentance.*

Quest. Which is the true repentance?

Answ. That which Christ gives, whom God hath exalted to be the prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, *Acts* v. 31. It is not in man's power to repent; his heart is hard and impenitent. It is God's power which melteth, tendereth, and changeth the heart. So that there is a great difference between the sense and sorrow of man's nature, and the sense and sorrow which God gives to the heart which he renews and changes. The one is of an earthly, the other of a heavenly, nature. The one is like the early dew, or morning cloud, it soon passeth away; the other is written in the new heart, and abideth. So that in it there is a real sorrow and mourning over the corrupt nature, and all the dead works of the flesh, and a turning from them, and meddling no more with them. This is the repentance of the renewed-ones, which is the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ unto them, and is a godly sorrow for sin not to be repented of.

XXIII. *Concerning Faith.*

Quest. What is the true faith?

Answ. It is a belief in the power which saves, from a true sense and experience of it in the heart. For the power which saves must first manifest itself, before it can be believed in; and how doth it manifest itself, but by shining in the heart, which hath been darkened by transgression, to open the eye of the understanding, which the god of the world hath blinded, and to unstop the deaf ear, and so it begets and creates somewhat capable to receive its further manifestation. The scripture speaks of a new creation in Christ. Indeed all true believers are so: and they have the ability, the faculty, the power of believing from him who creates them anew. There is that which is called faith in unregenerate men; but that is not the faith I am now speaking of, but that which is the gift of God to his own birth, to his own begotten. *To you it is given not only to believe, &c.* *Phil.* i. 29. Mark: *it is given to believe.* Oh! this holy gift! this faith of the new-birth is the faith which pleaseth God, prevaieth with him, purifieth the heart to which it is given, giveth access to God, interest in his power and promises, and victory over the worldly nature, and over all the soul's enemies. Blessed be the Lord for bestowing and increasing it in the hearts of his children.

XXIV. Concerning Obedience.

Quest. *What is obedience?*

Answer. The obedience which flows from the true understanding of God's will, and from the holy nature which he begets in the heart. It is the obedience which flows from true sense, true understanding, and true faith. There is no birth can believe aright but one; nor is there any birth can obey aright, but that birth which believes aright. The true believing is from the quickening virtue of God's Spirit (all other faith is but dead faith); and the true obedience is in the newness of the Spirit, *Rom. vi. 4. and vii. 6.* Man may strive to understand and obey all his days; but he can do neither, but as he is quickened, taught, and enabled of the Lord. *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes,* *Psal. cxix. 33.* There is a mystical path of life. The way of wisdom, the way of holiness, the holy skill of obeying the truth, is hid from all living, from all mankind, but such as are begotten and brought up by him in the holy skill and mystery of subjection to the Lord. *Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power.* It is the power of God that works the will in the heart, and the same power works to do also; and none can learn either to will or to do aright, but as they come to be acquainted with that power, joined to that power, and feel that power working in them. And here, in this power, to this new-birth, faith and the holy obedience are as natural, as unbelief and disobedience are to the birth of the flesh. It is frequently and abundantly experienced by his holy birth, by the child of his begetting. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

XXV. Concerning Justification.

Quest. *What is justification, or how is a man justified in the sight of God?*

Answer. By a true sense of, and faith in, that which justifies; which is the Spirit, the life, the water, the blood, the virtue, the power of the Lord Jesus. All these are one in nature, and they go together. Man is sinful naturally, fallen from God, found a transgressor against him. Now he needs justification from his sins, and he needs justification in respect of what God hath intrusted him with, and requires of him; and in the new-birth, and joining to the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, he meets with both. Being quickened by his Holy Spirit, turned from the darkness, coming into the light, and walking in the light; there his sins are done away, blotted out, as if they had never been, for his name's sake; and there he receiveth a new ability, a new heart, a new Spirit, yea, the Spirit of the living God, to quicken him, and work in him; and whatever he doth in this Spirit (or rather what God doth by him, in and through this Spirit) is justified, owned, and accepted. God finds no fault in any of the fruits of

his own Spirit (in any of the children of men), but only in the fruits of the flesh. And if, for want of watchfulness, the enemy should prevail, and draw into a snare; yet upon turning to the light of God's Holy Spirit, which discovers and reproveth for it, in the holy light the water flows, the blood is sprinkled, the conscience is cleansed, and so becomes clean even in God's sight. Oh! blessed is he who is not deceived with dead notions of justification, but feels the justification which comes from God, and is accompanied with a living sense, and with the testimony of his Holy Spirit.

XXVI. *Concerning good Works.*

Quest. What are good works?

Ans. The works that flow from God's good Spirit, the works that are wrought in God, they are good works. The works of the new-birth, of the new creature, are good works; whereas all the works of the flesh are bad, though never so finely painted. All its thoughts, imaginations, reasonings, willings, runnings, hunting to find out God and heavenly things, with all its sacrifices, are corrupt and evil, having of the bad leaven, of the bad nature in them. Make the tree good, or its fruit can never be good; so that they are only the good works that flow from the good tree, from the good root. And here all the works of the flesh, though never so glorious and taking in man's eye, are shut out by God's measure, by God's line and plummet of righteousness and true judgment; and every work of God's Spirit, the meanest work of faith, the least labour of true love, the least shining of life in the heart, and the giving up thereto, is owned by God as coming from him, and wrought in him, who worketh both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. He that is gathered to the light which God hath enlightened him with, hath received the light, dwelleth in the light, and walketh in the light; the Spirit of the living God is near him, and dwelleth with him, and worketh in him; and he bringeth his deeds to the light, where it is manifest that they are wrought in God. But he that is out of the inward light of God's Holy Spirit, his works are not wrought in God, and so can but make a fair shew in the flesh (to the fleshly eye) but are not good in God's sight. The erring man's way and works are often right in his own eyes; ah! but blessed is he whose way and works are good and right in the eye of the Lord, in the judgment of his searching unerring light and Spirit.

XXVII. *Concerning Love.*

Quest. Which is the true love?

Ans. The love which ariseth from the nature which God begets, and from his circumcising the heart from the other nature. Love is the beautiful thing. What can be higher expressed concerning God himself, than

to say he is love? Love is greatly commended and admired, and there are many pretenders to it; but none have the true love, but only those that are born of God, and circumcised by him. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live,* Deut. xxx. 6. Mark: the true love ariseth from the true circumcision; and the more a man comes to have his heart circumcised from the fleshly nature, and to grow up in the pure and heavenly nature, the more he loves. God is love; and the nigher any one comes to him, and the more he partakes of him, the more he becomes love in the Lord, and the more he is taught of God to love the Lord his God, and his brethren in the Spirit, and all mankind who are of his blood (for of one blood God made all mankind) according to the flesh, or according to a natural consideration.

XXVIII. *Concerning Meekness and Patience.*

Quest. *What is the true meekness and patience?*

Ans. The meekness and patience which ariseth from the Lamb's nature. Deceit will put on an appearance of love, and deceit will put on also an appearance of meekness and patience; but it cannot put on the true love, the true meekness and patience: that is only learned of the Lamb, and received of him by receiving of his Spirit and nature from him. And oh! how precious is this! how sweet is it felt in the heart! To feel a meek, a quiet, a patient spirit in the midst of all trials, all troubles, all fears, all doubts, all temptations of every kind. Indeed this is of much price in the sight of the Lord, and also in the eye of him who hath received it from the Lord, and enjoyeth it in him, and possesseth his soul in him.

XXIX. *Concerning the Knowledge of the new Covenant.*

Quest. *What is the knowledge of the new covenant?*

Ans. The knowledge which is given by God to the new-birth: for to it the new covenant belongs, and the knowledge thereof. The truly begotten of God, the true disciples of Christ, to them it is given to know the kingdom of God; but to others it is not given. The Jew outward, the first birth, the birth after the flesh, for them the priest's lips were to preserve knowledge, and they were to seek the law at his mouth; and to them God sent prophets to speak to them, and taught them by his prophets: but concerning the inward Jews, the children of the new covenant, the children of the Jerusalem which is above, concerning her seed it was prophesied, that they all should be taught of the Lord; they all should hear and know the voice of the shepherd himself; they should all be gathered to the shepherd and bishop of the soul, and taught by him. So that in
this

this new, holy, living covenant, God himself is the shepherd, God himself is the teacher, not only of the greatest, but of the very least, *Heb. viii.* For he teacheth them all to know the Lord, and to know his Son, and to come to his Son, and to love him their Father, and one another. So that he that is taught of God, he hath the true knowledge, the living knowledge, the substantial knowledge, the knowledge of the thing itself, of the life eternal itself. All that are not thus taught (but learn only from a literal description and relations of things) have not the knowledge of the new covenant, the knowledge of the thing itself; but only an outward knowledge, such as the first birth may catch at, lay hold on, and comprehend.

XXX. *Concerning the Fear of the New Covenant.*

Quest. What is the fear of the new covenant?

Ans. It is the fear which God puts in the hearts of his children; which fear cleanseth their hearts, and keepeth them from departing from their God. There is a great deal of difference between the fear which may be learned from precepts from without, and the fear which God puts in the hearts of his children from a root of life within; which fear is of an heavenly nature, and is the free gift of God to his own heavenly birth, and none else; which no man can possibly attain by any thoughts or reasonings of his own, but only by the springings of life from God. And he that would have this fear, must know the place of wisdom, and wait there for it; and when he hath it, this fear will soon begin to make him wise towards salvation, and teach him to depart from evil, which is the cause of destruction, *Job xxviii. 28.*

XXXI. *Concerning Hope.*

Quest. What is the true Hope?

Ans. The stay of the mind upon the Lord, the stay of the heavenly birth upon its father: for we must distinguish between hope and hope. There is the hope of the hypocrite, or false birth, which shall perish; and the hope of the true birth, which will never fail it, nor make it ashamed; because that birth is taught of God to hope aright. Now in hope, there is both the ground of it, and the hope itself. The ground of the hope is God's love, God's truth, God's faithfulness, God's grace, his seed, his Christ felt within; being of him, united to him, in him, he in me: here is the ground of my assurance of the everlasting glory and inheritance, which is sure to the seed, and to all that are of and in the seed. So knowing Christ within me, feeling Christ within me, living in him, and he in me, I have an anchor sure and steadfast within the veil, which no storms, no tempests, no trials, no temptations, present or to come, have power over me. And then there is the hope, or hoping itself; that is, the staying of the mind
upon

upon the Lord, the leaning upon the Lord, the retiring beyond all thoughts, or reasonings, or lookings out, to the inward life; to feel somewhat spring from it, for the soul to hope or trust in, beyond all outward appearance. And this hope never deceives nor makes ashamed those who are taught of God thus to stay their minds upon him. Nay, though the state be darkness, and no light seen; yet beneath the darkness there is somewhat to stay the mind of the child and servant of the Lord till he appear, and cause light to break out of obscurity; for light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright, even in their darkest, saddest, and most distressed conditions; in all which the Lord is near them, and there is still ground for them to hope in him.

XXXII. *Concerning Peace.*

Quest. Which is the true peace?

Ans. The peace which God speaks to the soul; the peace which Christ gives to his own disciples. The way of truth, the way of life leads to peace; and the peace which is found therein is of God's giving, and is the true peace. First, God breathes upon the heart, begets a right birth, a true child; then he leads him into the holy way, the righteous way; from that which loads and burdens, to that wherein is the ease and rest. Thus in the believing and following him there is joy and peace. This is experienced by all the true travellers, and by none else. No man, with all his wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, can so much as guess at what this peace is. The peace of God, the peace which he speaks to his children, the nature of it, the sweetness of it, the heavenliness of it, passeth man's understanding; but he who is born from above, who hath a new and heavenly understanding, he knoweth the nature, excellency, and preciousness of it; and would not for all this world, for any fear, or danger, or expectation of any thing from without, hazard the breaking off this precious peace and rest of his soul in his God.

XXXIII. *Concerning Joy.*

Quest. Which is the true joy?

Ans. The joy which flows from God's presence, and the work of his power in the heart, and the assured expectation which he gives of the full inheritance and glory of life everlasting. When the bridegroom is present, when the soul is gathered home to him, married to him, in union with him, in the holy living fellowship; when he appears against the enemies of the soul, rising up against them, breaking, scattering them, and giving of his good things, filling with life, filling with love, filling with virtue, feasting the soul in the presence of the Father; oh! what sweet joy! oh! what fullness of joy is there then in the heart! *In thy presence is fullness of joy.*

joy, and at thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore, said the psalmist, *Pf. xvi. 11.* Surely he had had a taste of the thing, he had been in God's presence, and that made him cry out, *Cast me not away from thy presence, Psal. li. 11.*; and he had drank of the river of God's pleasure, which is at his right-hand, which made him speak so sensibly of it, *Psal. xxxvi. 8. and xlv. 4.* Christ said to his disciples, that because of his going away they should have sorrow; but he would see them again, and their heart should rejoice, and their joy no man should take from them, *John xvi. 22.* How or when was this fulfilled? What were they sorry for? Was it not the loss of his outward presence, which had been so sweet and comfortable to them? How would he come to them again? Was it not by the Comforter? Was it not by his inward and spiritual presence? So that he that was with them should be in them? Before they knew Christ with them; now they should know Christ in them; the Father in them, and they in him; Immanuel, the gospel state, God with us, dwelling with us, tabernacling in us, living in us, walking in us, and we living and walking in him. When the apostles came to this state, then they came to witness the joy in the Holy Ghost, even the joy unspeakable, and full of glory. And hence it is that the gospel state is a state of joy and rejoicing in the Lord, even in his glorious living presence, and in the glory of his power. For in the gospel state the true light shines inwardly in the heart, the life is manifested; and being manifested, they that come into the manifestation of it, come into the holy union, and into the holy fellowship with the Father and Son, where the joy is, and where the joy is full; where the power is revealed which does away that which is contrary to the holy fellowship, and hinders the holy joy and rejoicing in the Lord. See 1 *John i. 3, 4.*

XXXIV. *Concerning Poverty of Spirit and Humility.*

Quest. Which is the right poverty of spirit, and the true humility?

Answ. That poverty and humility of spirit which springeth from the same root from which the faith, the love, the peace, the joy, and the other heavenly things arise; and is of the same nature. There is a voluntary humility, and a voluntary poverty, even of spirit, which man casts himself into, and forms in himself, by his own workings and reasonings. This is not the true, but the false image, or counterfeit of the true; but then there is a poverty which ariseth from God's emptying the creature, from God's stripping the creature; and an humility which ariseth from a new heart and nature. This of the right kind, and is lasting, and abides in the midst of the riches and glory of the kingdom. For as Christ was poor in spirit before his Father, and lowly in heart in the midst of all the fullness which he received from him; so it is with those who are of the same birth and nature with Christ. They are filled with humility, and cloathed with humility, in the midst of all the graces and heavenly riches which God fills

fills them and adorns them with. Keep in the faith, keep in the truth, keep in the light, keep in the power; it excludes boasting in or after the flesh, and keeps the mind in that humility and poverty of spirit which God hath brought, and daily further and further brings it into; and so the humility and poverty remains (poor in spirit for ever, humble in spirit for ever, nothing before the Lord for ever) even as that remains which brought into that frame, and keeps in that frame for ever. And so the Lord of life is only exalted, and the creature kept abased before him, and low for ever; and is nothing but as the Lord pleaseth to fill, and make it to be what it is. So what I am, I am by God's love, by his grace, by his mercy, by his goodness, by his power, by his wisdom, by his righteousness, by his holiness, which he of his own good pleasure communicateth, and causeth to spring in me, and filleth and cloatheth me with, as seemeth good in his sight.

The CONCLUSION.

THERE is mention made in the book of the *Revelations*, in the epistles from Christ to the seven churches of Asia, of a tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (the fruit whereof is good for food, and the leaves thereof for the healing of the nations); and of hidden manna, and a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which none knoweth but he that receiveth it; and of a morning-star to be given, and power over the nations, to rule their spirit, even as Christ hath received of his Father; and of being clothed in white, and his name confessed before the Father, (This is the sheep of my fold, the child of my Father's begetting, who is named by me among the living, I know him by his name, *John x. 3.*); as also of his being a pillar in the temple of God, and of going no more out, but bearing the name of God, and the name of the city of God, the new Jerusalem (which cometh down from God out of heaven); and of Christ's new name (oh! what is that!) and of sitting with Christ in his throne. This is the generation of spiritual kings, who have a spiritual kingdom, and a spiritual throne, even Christ's kingdom, and Christ's throne, the royal priesthood of God. Oh! precious things! Oh! rich glory! Surely eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of men to conceive what these things are.

Now he that would witness these things; he that would know, experience, and enjoy these things, must mind that seed in which they are wrapped up, as in a seed, and out of which they spring, and shoot forth. The kingdom is in the seed, the throne in the seed, the power in the seed. He that is united to the seed, and abideth in the seed, receiveth power from the seed, and overcometh, he shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son, *Rev. xxi. 7.* But he that will be so, must not be fearful or unbelieving of overcoming sin, or his soul's enemies; but must depend

upon the almighty, and all-sufficient power of God, which will give him victory over sin, and keep him that he touch no unclean thing; that he may be holy, as the Lord his God is holy; and righteous, even as the Lord his God is righteous. Indeed it becometh the heavenly children to partake of the divine life, of the heavenly nature of their Father, and be like him. And he that partaketh of his nature, of his holiness, *Heb. xii. 10.* is holy, as he is holy: and he that from the holy root of purity and righteousness, doth righteousness; is righteous, even as he is righteous, *1 John iii. 7.* So it is written without, and so it is testified within, by him that is born of God, in whom the seed remaineth, which overcometh the wicked one, bruise him and keepeth him under: and the just live by the faith which giveth victory over him.

Some EXPERIENCES added.

I. Concerning the Seed of the Kingdom.

CONCERNING the seed of the kingdom, this I have experienced; that it consists not in words or notions of the mind, but is an inward thing, an inward spiritual substance in the heart, as real inwardly in its kind, as other seeds are outwardly in their kind: and that being received by faith, and taking root in man (his heart, his earth, being ploughed up and prepared for it) it groweth up inwardly, and bringeth forth fruit inwardly, as truly and really as any outward seed doth outwardly. This seed is known by its contrariety and enmity against the seed of the serpent; against all the seeds of evil in the hearts of men; it discovering them, turning the mind from them, and warring against them, and bruising and overcoming them in all that receive it, and let in its holy nature; which, as an holy leaven or salt, worketh out that which is unholy and unrighteous, dark and dead, and seasoneth with light, with life, with grace, with the holiness and righteousness of truth.

II. Concerning the Soul's Food.

The soul's food is that which nourisheth it, which is the same with that which giveth it life. Every word proceeding out of the mouth of God, every motion, every quickening, every operation of his Spirit is living, and nourisheth the soul with life, which receiveth it and feedeth on it. The spiritual Manna, the spiritual Water, from the Holy Well or Fountain, the Milk of the Word, the Flesh and Blood of the Son of the living God, his words which are spirit and life, nourish up the living birth unto life everlasting.

everlasting. How comes man to live at first; but by hearing the voice of him that giveth life? And how comes man to live afterwards, and to increase in life, but by hearing the same voice still? *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, &c.* Isa. lv. 3. This I have also experienced to give me life, to nourish up and strengthen me in life; even fresh life communicated from the living Fountain; and so my life is not in myself, not in any thing I can comprehend concerning Christ; but in being joined to him, in being ingrafted into him the holy root, into him the true olive-tree, into his Spirit: and so by the sap that springs up into me from him, my life is maintained and increased in me daily. Glory to his name for ever.

III. Concerning God's Power.

Concerning God's power, this I have experienced; that that is it which doth the work in the soul. It begets to God, it brings out of the land of darkness, it leads through all entanglements, and preserves in the midst of them all. It breaks down the old building of sin and iniquity (both inwardly and outwardly, both in heart, and also in life and conversation) and raiseth the new and holy building. It makes willing, it makes obedient, it gives to believe, it gives to suffer. Oh! blessed be the Lord for the day of his power, which is inwardly broken forth! Oh! what would the poor child do, (the poor Lambs in the midst of the Wolves, inwardly and outwardly) were it not for the Father's hand, the Father's arm, the Father's power, which is still with them, and compasseth them about! Oh! blessed are they that know the ministration of the life inwardly, the power of life inwardly! For in life, in the seed of life, is the holy power; which is manifest, appears and works, as it gains ground on the creature, to put forth and exercise in it the virtue and strength which it daily receiveth from its Father.

IV. Concerning Temptations.

Concerning temptations, this I have experienced; that the strength and hurt of them, as to the soul, lies in the soul's looking at them. For the strength of God is revealed in his children against the tempter; which being patiently waited for, and trusted in, will never fail them. The least babe, the Lord would not have let in temptation and sin: but watch to that, and keep joined to that, which will preserve out of temptation, and out of sin. God is faithful, who hath care of all his, and whose promise is to all his: and as he would have none sin; so none that diligently wait, shall want his power to stand by them, to preserve out of sin. *Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth.* It is universally true. Look unto me, trust in me; look not at yourselves, trust not in yourselves; look not at the enemy, fear not the enemy;

enemy; I will save you from every snare, every temptation, as your eye is stedfast upon me. What if the enemy come in like a flood? If the Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against him, can he prevail? What though he cast fiery darts? What though he beset round about? Will not the shield of faith quench them all? Will not the whole armour of God defend and keep safe from them all? If the enemy be resisted lawfully, (that is, in true faith in that power which is engaged for the soul against him) doth not the power of the Lord arise and scatter him, and strengthen and establish the soul in the grace, and in the truth? Oh! the holy mystery of the heavenly warfare, and of the working of the pure power against the enemy; which overcomes all his impurities, and keeps clean from them! Look not at the enemy; let not in the reasonings of the mind; keep in the patience, keep in the pure fear, in the holy living sense; be only what thou art in the seed, in the new birth, in the life which God hath begotten in thee; then art thou safe, then art thou in the name of the Lord, which is the strong tower. The enemy indeed may make a noise about thee with his lusts, with his temptations, with his floods, with his storms, with his fiery darts: but he cannot enter thy habitation. The spirit of darkness, the prince of darkness, is shut out of the land of the living. Abide thou there: dwell in the light, and walk in the light, as God is in the light, and he shall never have power over thee.

V. Concerning Prayer.

I have experienced prayer to be the breathing of that birth which God begets, to the Father of life which begat it; who by his Spirit makes known to it its condition and wants, and gives a suitable sense of heart, and cries to it. For as it is not in man to beget himself to God; no more can he pray to God in his own will or time, but as God pours out the Spirit of prayer and supplication upon him, and by his Spirit teacheth and helpeth him to pray as he ought. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.* I have had a sense of the natural man, and of the spiritual man; and of the cries and prayers of each: and this I have been taught and learned of God, that the gospel-prayer is the prayer of that birth which is begotten by the Spirit and power of the gospel; and which prays in the Spirit, and in the springing of the holy life and power; whereby it rightly wrestles, and prevails with God, obtaining the mercies and blessings which it wrestles with him for. For to this child there is access from God in the faith, through that holy Spirit of life which makes way for it, to obtain grace and mercy in the time of need. And through this Spirit it prays to God, and prevails with him on the behalf of others also. For the prayers of the righteous avail much, as it is written.

VI. *Concerning Justification and Sanctification, some things which it hath pleased the Lord, in his tender mercy, to give me to experience.*

First, That it is the same Christ, the same Spirit, the same Life, the same Wisdom, the same Power, the same Goodness, Love and Mercy, the same Water, the same Blood, which both justifies and sanctifies.

Secondly, That justification and sanctification go hand in hand together. There is none justified, but he that is in measure sanctified: and there is none sanctified, but he that is in some measure justified. For God justifieth by a rule (by the new covenant, and according to the law thereof); and men receive and partake of justification, according as they are brought into, and keep within, the compass of that rule. For God acted of old toward, and justified, the children of the old covenant according to the law thereof; and the children of the new covenant are justified, and partake of justification, according to the law thereof.

Thirdly, That justification and sanctification are both of and through the grace. It is so in the beginning, and it is so all along. *By grace ye are saved*, saith the apostle. The whole work of salvation is begun and carried on through grace. It is through that, God visits and reaches to the soul, with his quickening virtue and power. He regenerates also thereby. Through that he justifies; through that he sanctifies, &c. So that as the work goes on, grace, grace, is to be cried to him that does the work, from his very laying the foundation and fastening the soul thereupon, to his very laying on of the top stone.

Fourthly, Though justification and sanctification be of God's grace and mercy in Christ; yet this doth not exclude faith: but they are also through faith, and not without it. God doth not justify man in the unbelieving state, in the dead state, in his abiding there; but in the coming out of it, in the repenting and turning from the dead works to the living God, and in believing in him: and so he also sanctifies him.

Fifthly, Faith and obedience are of the same nature, and always go together. So that where-ever there is faith, there is obedience likewise; and where-ever there is obedience, there is faith. Obedience flows from faith, and cannot be without it; for the very nature and virtue of faith is in it. And faith is obedience. For this is the command of God, that the soul believe on him (and in his appearances) whom he hath sent to save; and this believing is obedience unto him that commands it. And this faith, and this obedience, is holy and just in God's sight; and through it (but not without it) the soul is both justified and sanctified.

Sixthly, That the works of faith, the works of the new life, are not the works of the law, the works of the old covenant; nor are excluded justification, as the works of the old covenant are. For I have found the Lord, who hath condemned and excluded all my doings, which ever I have been able

able to do of myself, still justify and accept what his Spirit and holy power hath done in me. They are not of the same nature in themselves; nor are they so accounted of in the eye of the Lord. For the Lord distinguisheth between root and root: and what springeth from the holy root, he justifieth as holy; and what ariseth from the unholy root, he condemneth as unholy.

Seventhly, That by the law of faith all boasting is excluded, in the whole work both of justification and sanctification. What is the law of faith? Is not this its law, to fetch all from the Son, to do all in the Son? to quit self, and its own ability, and to perform all in the newness of the Spirit, in the ability which is of God, given and continued, in and through his grace and mercy, to the soul in the Lord Jesus Christ; all the veins of life, all the streams of the new covenant run here. Here is no boasting of the creature; here can be no boasting: for all its ability and strength is shut out; and that which is given of God to it, is all and doth all. Yet every Jew here hath praise of God. His faith is commended, his love is commended, his faithfulness is commended, his zeal for the Lord, his obedience to the Lord, his patience in suffering, is commended, &c. But the praise and honour of all redounds not to his flesh, but to the Spirit and grace of God in him. So that here flesh is laid low, and kept in the dust for ever, and God alone exalted in this day of his pure power in the heart. He that truly believeth, entereth into rest. How into rest? From what doth he rest? Why, from his own works, from the works of the flesh; yea, from the works of the old covenant; from the works that arise from his own ability, from the works wherein he can never be justified with the gospel-justification. But doth he cease from the works of faith? Doth he cease from the labour of love? Doth he cease from obedience to any thing that God requires? Nay: then surely he rather beginneth to work and labour in the vineyard; and his labour is not in vain in the Lord.

VII. *Concerning Faith.*

Several things I have experienced, both concerning the nature, virtue, and operations of it; some whereof (as I feel them spring up livingly in my heart) I may mention at this time.

First, This I have often experienced; that it is an hard thing truly and rightly to believe. It is an easy matter to believe notions concerning God, and concerning Christ: but to believe in God, to believe in Christ, to believe in him that raised up Jesus, to believe in the light, life, and power, which flows from Jesus; this indeed is hard, by reason of the great darkness and ignorance which man is fallen into through transgression.

Secondly, I have experienced this also; that faith is God's gift, and that it flows from the power of his life. There is first a quickening, first a touching of the heart, by the holy pure power of the Lord; and when a
man

man is touched and quickened, then in and by and through that virtue which flows into him, he can believe in that which toucheth and quickeneth him.

Thirdly, That Faith never stands in a man's own power, but always in the virtue and power of the life of the Son. So that he that will believe aright, must wait to feel the life of the Son revealed in him, and faith flowing therefrom. For the true belief springs from the life of the holy root; and from the flowing up and springing up of that life, faith receives its nourishment and daily virtue.

Fourthly, I have observed this in my travels; that the earthly wisdom, and notions therefrom got into the mind, and held in the mind out of the sense of life, are a great lett to faith. For these strengthen and nourish that in man, which is to be weakened and die; that life, and the birth of life, may be all in the heart. Man is to die; man is to be ceased from; his understanding, his wisdom, is to be brought to nought. But after it hath had a stroke and wound from God's Holy Spirit and power (even the very wound which tends to death) yet it will be getting life again (getting its deadly wound healed) and nourishing its life by those very notions, which came from that life and power, which in measure slew it. And thus the Jew outward hath his life in the outwardness of knowledge, in the outwardness of the law, in the letter which killeth: for the relation and outward knowledge of things killeth and deadeneth more and more, unless man come into the inward life and virtue, and daily feel them quickened there. *If ye live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit*, said the apostle. A man cannot live in an outwardness of knowledge concerning the Spirit and power of the endless life; but he that would truly live, must live in the Spirit itself; and he that would rightly walk on in his way, must walk in that Spirit wherein he received life, and wherein he that abideth lives before the Lord.

Fifthly, This I have also observed; that all notional faith, wherein is not the living virtue (as concerning Christ, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession; and concerning justification by him, &c.), the enemy will let the soul alone with, and let him enjoy peace in; but his war is desperately against the true faith, against faith in the true power, against faith in the light of life. Oh! how many sore and sharp assaults doth he make against the faith which receives its virtue from God, and causeth the soul to live to God! And how sore is it with the soul, when faith is weak, and the enemy comes on against it with the strength of his assaults and temptations. *Lord increase our faith*, said the sensible disciples.

Sixthly, It is a precious thing to feel faith quickened by God, and helped by God, against the enemy. For the enemy cannot prevail against the soul; but the soul, through the virtue and power of life, prevails over the enemy in the faith. And this is the great work of a Christian, not only to wrestle and fight, but to learn so to wrestle, and so to fight, as to overcome.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, That in the pure fear (not that which is taught by the precepts of men, but which God puts into the heart) faith hath its strength, and exerciseth its strength. Oh! who knows the preciousness of this fear! The power of faith, the power of life, the power of salvation, and everlasting preservation is revealed in it. Therefore, saith the Lord, when he speaketh of providing for his children in the new covenant, that they shall abide with him for ever, and not depart any more from him, as the children of the old covenant did; *I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.* And when the angel preached the everlasting gospel, how did he preach it? *Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgments is come, &c.* Rev. xiv. When the pure fear is felt, when that which is contrary to God is judged; then the gospel is known, and the work thereof experienced in the heart. And how easy is it, when the pure fear is felt, to distrust and deny one's self, and trust in the Lord! Oh! how weak are the reasonings and imaginations then, and how strong is the power which scatters them, and lifts up the head over them!

Now it concerns every one deeply to consider, of what nature his faith is, and what virtue is in it, and what it can do in and through the power of the Lord for him; how it fetcheth in the true living nourishment every day, how it delivers the soul, and gives it victory over that which faith was appointed to deliver from. For he who through the faith overcometh that which is contrary to God, shall inherit; and he that fights the good fight of faith, shall overcome: but he that overcomes not his enemies, which stand in his way, shall be sure to be hindered by them from attaining to his journey's end.

VIII. *Concerning Obedience, some Experiences also.*

First, True obedience, gospel-obedience, flows from life, flows from the living faith. If I could obey in all things that God requires of me, yet that would not satisfy me, unless I felt my obedience flow from the birth of his life in me. *My Father doth all in me,* saith Christ. This was Christ's comfort. And to feel Christ do all in the soul, is the comfort of every one that truly believes in him.

Secondly, True obedience, gospel obedience, is natural to the birth which is born of God. It is unnatural to the flesh, to man's wisdom, to deny himself, and take up the cross; but it is natural to the birth which is born of God's Spirit. *That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit;* and it is natural to it to be conversant in, and exercised about, that which is spiritual.

Thirdly, That honouring and pleasing, and answering the will of the Lord, is the proper aim of the truly obedient. Oh! how do they delight to do the will of God! *I have meat,* saith Christ, *that ye know not of.* To do the will was his meat and drink: and it is meat and drink to all that are
of

of his nature and Spirit. If I should never have any other reward, but the pleasure of obedience; yet I could not but say and testify, that in answering the law of the pure life, in keeping the holy statutes and commandments of God's Spirit, there is great reward. But yet there is a crown also, and a reaping after this life of every thing that is sown to the Spirit: and the crown is weighty and everlastingly glorious.

Fourthly, Gospel obedience is exceeding necessary in and to the gospel-state. Mark! *The Lamb is the leader*: and can any be saved by him, but they that follow him? When Christ calls out of the world, must not the soul come to him, who is the Shepherd? And must not the sheep daily learn to know his voice, and follow him; even till they come to be acquainted with every moving, drawing, and leading of his Spirit; and so come to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes? Mark! what a weight Christ layeth upon doing. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Why then the disciple cannot come to happiness, but in the doing, in the obeying of the will of Christ, his Lord and Master. And *he that beareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock.* But the believer, without doing the will, is the foolish builder, whose building will not stand. Again saith Christ, *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* The disciples whom he most dearly loved, must keep his commandments, if they will continue in his love. And his apostles taught the same, even the working out of the salvation, and the purifying of the heart, through the obedience of the truth. For mark! There is a covenant of life, a way of life: and how can life be reaped, how can the work of life go on, but in subjection and obedience thereto?

Oh! blessed is he, who meets with the power of life, which enables to obey; and who is obedient and subject to that power. For he that truly believes in Christ, is turned by him to his light, and to the power of his Father; and the peace, growth, joy, blessedness, &c. is witnessed in subjection thereto.

IX. Concerning the Cross of Christ.

This I have experienced concerning the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; that it is an inward and spiritual thing, producing inward and spiritual effects in the mind; and that this is it, even that which slays the enmity in the mind, and crucifies to the world, and the affections thereof. *God forbid*, said the apostle, *that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* Now mark; That which is contrary to the world, and crucifies to the world, that is the cross. The cross hath this power, and nothing else; and so there is

nothing else to glory in. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other.* Mind, here is the cross: the Spirit which is contrary to the flesh, which mortifies the flesh, thro' the obedience whereof the flesh is crucified. *If ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Whatsoever is of and in the Spirit, is contrary to the flesh. The light of the Spirit is contrary to the darkness of the flesh. The holiness of the Spirit is contrary to the unholiness of the corrupt heart. The life of the Spirit is contrary to the life (or rather death) that is in sin. The power of the Spirit is contrary to the power that is in Satan, and his kingdom. The wisdom of God is contrary, and a foolish thing, to the wisdom of man. Yea, the new creature, which springs from God's Holy Spirit, is contrary and death to the old. Now he that comes hither, out of his own wisdom, out of his own will, out of his own thoughts, out of his own reasonings; and comes to a discerning of God's Spirit, and to the feeling of his begetting of life in his heart, and his stirrings and movings in the life which he hath begotten; and waits here, and receives counsel here; he is taught to deny himself, and to join to and take up that, by which Christ daily crosseth and subdueth in him that which is contrary to God.

And here is the fight of faith, and the good travel under the cross, whereby the holy journey is gone, and the enemies (which rise up to oppose in the way) vanquished and overcome. For here is the power revealed; the preserving power, the leading power, the conquering power of him, who rideth on conquering and to conquer his spiritual enemies in the hearts of his children, who know his voice, and are subject to him; who daily denying themselves, and taking up his cross, follow him. Woe is to them that are at ease in Sion, under any thing that is contrary to God; but blessings are upon them whose dwelling is under the cross, and who know no ease but what it allows. It will make truth, life, holiness, righteousness, faith, obedience, meekness, patience, love, separation from sin, communion with the Lord, and all the fruits of the Spirit, as natural to them in the renewed state, as ever sin was in the corrupt state. And in that state they shall be able to say with Paul; who once complained of his captivity, and that he did what he hated; yet after he had known the power of the cross, and was crucified with Christ, he could then do nothing against the truth, but for the truth; yea, then being a conqueror, having overcome the enemies which stood in his way, he could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. The cause of so many complaints and bowings down of the head, and going mourning because of the prevailings of the enemy, through temptations, sin, and corruption, is because the cross of Christ, which is the power of God (which is his ordinance against the strength of the enemy) is either not known, or not taken up. And this is the reason that many that make a fair shew for a while, yet afterwards come to nothing (but are like untimely figs, or like corn upon the house-tops, which
hastily

hastily springeth up, but soon withereth) because they either never rightly learn, or keep not to the cross. For that alone hath power from God to bring down and keep down that which is contrary to him. So that from under the cross of Christ, there is no witnessing salvation or preservation from the Lord; but out of the limits of the cross, the enemy hath power to recover and bring back under his dominion again. And whosoever in his travels leaves the cross behind him, does draw back unto perdition, and not travel on, in the living faith and newness of obedience, towards the salvation of the soul.

X. Concerning the Mystery of Life, and the Mystery of the Fellowship which is therein.

God is hid from man, as he lies in his sinful and fallen state; and no man can find or know him, but as he pleaseth to reveal himself by his own blessed Spirit. And Christ, being God's image, there is no knowing or confessing him, or right calling him Lord, but in and by the same Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 3. When he appeared in the days of his flesh, flesh and blood could not reveal him, but only the Father. And he is the same to-day as he was yesterday. He is not to be known now, but in the same Spirit, in his own grace and truth, in a measure of his own life. The dead cannot know him; they only know him, who are his sheep, who are quickened and made alive by him. And this life is a mystery: none can understand it, but they that partake of it. Can a man that is naturally dead, know what the life of nature means? No more can a man that is spiritually dead, know what the life of the Spirit means. The natural man may get the words that came from life, and cry up them, and speak great words of the fame of wisdom, and of her children; but the thing itself is hid from them all. Oh! it is a strait gate, at which the birth enters, at which none else can enter. The wise and prudent knowers and searchers after the flesh (and of the scriptures, as they can put meanings upon them and comprehend them) are shut out in every age; but there is a babe born of naked truth (born of the pure simplicity) admitted by God, while men disdain and despise it.

And the fellowship of the saints is in the life, and in the light, which is this mystery. The fellowship is not outward, but inward. All they that meet together in the outward place, are not in the fellowship or worship; but only they that meet together in the inward life and Spirit. *They that worship the Father, must worship him in Spirit and truth.* Look, there is the worship, there are the worshippers; they that are in the Spirit, in the truth; they that meet in the Spirit, in the truth, they meet together in the one spiritual place, as I may call it. And so we own no man after the flesh, no man according to the appearance; but in the righteous judgment of the Spirit, those only who are of the Spirit. Indeed we are tender, where there is the least beginning of the work of God in any heart; yea, where there

is but so much as a conviction of the understanding; but men are not presently of us, who own our principle in words or outward appearance, but only such as are inwardly changed thereby in the heart. It is true, persons may walk among us, and afterwards go out from us, who were never of us (as it was in the apostles days) that were never in the fellowship of life with us, whom we could never own in the sight of the Lord, as being born of him; though we were willing to wait and watch for their good, that they might come to witness the true birth. Now from such come the offences, even from the falling off of such as never were truly ingrafted, and also from the slips of such who are not watchful to that which preserves. And woe is to the world, because of the offences which cannot but come. For they which are to be approved in the sight of the Lord, must not somewhat or other happen to make them manifest? And when they are made manifest, the world's eye is offended, and is apt to think hardly of, and reproach the truth itself, because of them. Blessed is the eye which sees into the mystery, into the life itself, where there is no offence. Truth is one and the same for ever.

XI. Concerning judging according to the appearance, and judging righteous judgment. Judge not according to the appearance (said Christ) but judge righteous judgment, John vii. 24.

What is it to judge according to the appearance? and what is it to judge righteous judgment? I shall speak what I have experienced, having been deeply exercised about this thing. Mark then;

The holy Spirit of Life breatheth upon the heart; and, by his breathing and working there, he quickens and begets life, *John iii. 8.* And that which is begotten and born of him, is begotten and born in his nature, and so is of the same nature with him, as verse 6 of that chapter.

Now to that which is born of the Spirit, the Spirit is the leader, the preserver, the supporter, the comforter, the daily quickener. He can do nothing without the Spirit, without the present life and power of him that begat him: so that all the judgment which the birth of life hath, is from, and of, and in the Holy Spirit of the Father.

And here is true judgment, both concerning righteousness, and against all unrighteousness; so that keep to the life, keep to the Spirit, keep to the birth, keep to the power, then is the wisdom and righteous judgment of God revealed: but any that go out of this, and measure without this, they measure in the unrighteousness; and though they search the scriptures, and think in themselves they measure from the scriptures, yet they are mistaken, and measure but from their own knowledge and apprehensions upon the scriptures, as the scribes and pharisees did, when they seemed to conclude, upon searching the scriptures, that Christ could not be the Messiah, *John vii. 52. Search and look (said they) for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*
How

How then can this Galilean be he? See by the scriptures if this can be the Christ.

It is said of Christ, *He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge, &c. Isa. xi. 3, 4.* Christ judged righteous judgment. How came he to judge so? Why; he judged in and with the Spirit. He kept to the Spirit's judgment. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and made him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord, *ver. 2, 3.* And no man can judge aright concerning the things of God, but in and by the same Spirit. How shall I know whether my duties be right, my prayers right, my ways right, my worship right, my faith right, my hope of the right kind, my knowledge and understanding of the scriptures right, &c.? Why there is none but one can determine. He who begetteth life, knows whether that which is in thee be from his life; and whether that which thou offerest to him, be truly living or no: and when the Lord separates the living from the dead, what will remain in many that make great professions at this day?

I would have no man mistaken about these things; I know many are deeply mistaken, as their own hearts will one day acknowledge, when the Lord shall make manifest to them, how they have called evil good, and good evil; and put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Indeed it is just as it was in the days of Christ's appearing outwardly in a body of flesh. The same life, the same Spirit, is denied now as was then. Then the Jews cried up Christ to come; but they then spiritually saw him not. They saw the flesh (or outward form) but they saw not him who dwelt in that flesh. And though the world of Christians now acknowledge Christ is come, and did appear, yet neither do they know him who did appear, but deny his life, his Spirit, his virtue, his power, which is revealed in this day of his love and goodness to the eyes of the children of the true wisdom. *Oh! let not flesh judge: be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, and cease judging, for he is arisen to judge. He is judge in the midst of his people, and he will judge the beaten also.*

And every one bring this near. Wait to feel flesh judged in thee, and brought down in thee, that it may not judge in thee; but Spirit and life may be exalted, and sit upon the throne in thy heart: and when life is exalted, and doth begin to judge, *Oh! take heed of hearkening to the flesh, of letting in the judgment of flesh afterwards, lest the Spirit be grieved and quenched!* For the wisdom of the flesh is near, and will be striving to get in and recover its seat again; and if the watch be not singly kept to God's Holy Spirit, somewhat else will be judging in thee, which will judge according to the appearance of things to thy mind, and so thou wilt miss of the true and righteous judgment of God's Spirit.

XII. *A question answered about knowing God's Spirit.*

Quest. How shall I know God's Spirit? How shall I know the motions thereof? How may I know whether the faith and hope in my heart be from him? Whether my prayers and desires arise thence, &c.

Answ. No man of himself, or by any way he of himself can take, can know God's Spirit: there must first be a capacity given before any man can know the Spirit of the Lord; his life, his power, must first be felt, and somewhat quickened, somewhat formed by him, somewhat begotten of him, which is Spirit, and this can know him. Now man in this may know him, but out of this can never know him. Therefore this is the great skill, and diligence, and wisdom of a Christian, to keep to this, to wait for this, to have his eye toward the pure spring of wisdom, that, when it springs, he may discern and receive it; and when that which is of a contrary nature springs, he may discern it under all its deceitful appearances, and turn from it. For out of the heart are the issues both of life and death. There is all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness in the unrighteous nature, in the unrighteous spirit; and if the watch be not diligently kept, it is easy to be deceived at any time: but the true seed, the holy seed, the living seed, the elect seed, the immortal seed, is never deceived. Oh! blessed are they who have their eyes opened and kept open in it, to discern the mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity, that they may be preserved safe in the one, out of the reach of the other!

XIII. *Some queries concerning the seed of the kingdom, in which the kingdom itself is contained (as the nature and substance of things is contained in the seed thereof) and out of which it springeth up and ariseth in the heart.*

Quer. 1. What is that seed which is spoken of, 1 John iii. 9. which remaineth in those that are born of God, and preserveth out of sin those that are led by it and comprehended in it? Is it not the seed of the kingdom?

Quer. 2. Do not the natural herbs and flowers, the natural plants and trees, grow from a natural seed? Do not the spiritual plants, the spiritual trees, the trees of righteousness, grow from the seed of righteousness?

Quer. 3. Was it not the great doctrine of Christ to preach the kingdom? and how did he preach it? Did he not preach it as a seed, as a grain of mustard-seed? and did he not liken this spiritual seed to leaven, to a precious pearl, to treasure hid in a field, to a piece of silver lost, &c. Oh! how happy is he who knows and enjoys the thing itself which Christ preached! All the prophets prophesied concerning him; and when he came, this was his doctrine, that men should mind this, look after this, purchase this, possess this,

this, feel this planted and grow up in them, and themselves ingrafted into and growing up in it.

Quer. 4. Can any man be born of God, and not born of this seed? Can any man be born of this seed, and not be born of God?

Quer. 5. How doth grace and truth come by Jesus Christ? Doth it not grow up from this seed? can it grow up any other way in any heart?

Quer. 6. Is not salvation felt and witnessed in every heart (of those that are in any measure redeemed) as this seed grows up and overshadows them? Was not this the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, *1 Pet. i. 10.* whereof the apostle Peter himself was made a partaker? *chap. v. 10.* In the law were the shadows of good things to come; but in the gospel the substance, the seed itself, is revealed.

Quer. 7. Is it not the right beginning in religion to begin in the Spirit? and can any begin in the Spirit, but he that begins in and with the seed of the kingdom?

Quer. 8. Is it not the main and chief thing in religion to know this seed, to feel this seed, to be joined to this seed, and abide in this seed?

Quer. 9. Is not all that flows from this seed true and certain? is not the knowledge certain here? the faith here? the love here? the peace here? the joy here? the righteousness here? From this true root, can there grow or shoot forth any thing but that which is true? Oh! every breathing here is from pure life, and precious in the eye of the Father. Is there any certainty elsewhere? Oh! when the Lord appears, will he not disown all the religion and worship which is not of this growth?

Quer. 10. But some may say, how may I know this seed, and how may I be joined to it?

Answer. In the quickening life mayest thou know it, and no-where else. Didst thou ever feel that which quickened thy heart towards the Lord? Therein and thereby, at that time, thou mayest feel an eye and heart opened, which can truly see and know somewhat of God: and, keeping thy eye to the quickening power of God, as that stirs, moves and operates, in thee and upon thee, thou mayest know again and know more.

Therefore eye the power which quickens, and eye the seed which it reveals and raiseth in thee, and wait to feel the power subjecting thee to the seed, that thou mayest come under it, and it may come over thee, and press down in thee all that is contrary to its pure nature.

And as thou comest hither, thou wilt find that which death hath no power over; and, as thou abidest there, thou shalt find it to have no power over thee. For, of a truth, in the holy covenant of life and peace, death never had nor can have power; but he who abideth in him who is the covenant, who is the shepherd, who is the love, who is the wisdom and power of God, witnesseth there a sure defence and strong tower, where salvation is for a wall and bulwark against the enemy.

There

There are many sorts of talkers concerning the thing, but there are few travellers into it; but he alone who is a true traveller into it, and takes up his rest there, certainly knows and can truly witness what is to be found there. And this is the reason that so many (who seem great and experienced knowers) cannot receive our testimony, because they know neither the seed nor its voice, concerning which and whereby we testify. But wisdom is justified of her children; and they that know the voice of the shepherd, know his present appearance in this our day, which is contrary to the wisdom and knowledge of all other seeds and births whatsoever. *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear*; but he that hath not the true ear, cannot hear the true testimony, though it should ever so often be declared unto him. But blessed is he that knows and stumbles not at the appearances of the seed and power of life in his own heart, but is turned from the darkness to the light there, and from the power of Satan to the manifestation of God's Spirit there. For the end of words (even of Christ's own directions in the days of his flesh) is to turn men to the holy life and power from whence the words came; and thither man is to travel, and therein to center, waiting on the Lord, in the way of his judgments and tender mercies, to witness a translation from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the dear Son; which kingdom is at first but as a grain of mustard-seed, and must be so known and so received.

And now let every serious heart examine concerning himself. Dost thou know the kingdom? is the seed grown in thee? doth it overspread thee? Art thou in it as in a kingdom? dost thou feel it overshadowing thee? art thou in unity with it? doth it speak peace to thee from the Lord? Is the wall of partition broken down in thee? Is there of twane made one new man? Dost thou feel that which is contrary to Christ subdued in thee by his power? and his holy nature, life, and Spirit, reigning over it? Canst thou read that scripture sensibly and experimentally, *if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*?

Ah! how miserably do men talk of Christ, the power of God, and miss of the effect and work of his power in them!

Faith is a powerful thing, it gives victory, (true faith gives victory) it scatters that which stands between, and gives real access to God, and lets in his pure, fresh, living virtue, upon the heart.

Love is a powerful thing, it constrains to obedience: and the heart that is circumcised to love the Lord God, Oh! how doth life flow from him into it!

Oh! away with empty notions, and come to the ministration of the Spirit, where the knowledge is living, the faith victorious, the love pure and undefiled, the worship truly spiritual, even flowing from, and comprehended in, the life and virtue of the Spirit. Oh! that all that truly breathe after the Lord, might be gathered hither, found here, and dwell here. *Amen.*

POSTSCRIPT to the EXPERIENCES.

PERSONS that have had some true touches of life, and true breathings after the Lord, yet not having their eye fixed rightly upon him, nor discerning from whence those come, may easily lose the true sense of life, and another birth of another nature spring up in them instead thereof. This was it we generally wanted in the day of our former profession, even the discerning of that, and fixing upon that, which begat life in us; through want whereof, many of the most tender-hearted came to a loss; whom the Lord at length shewed mercy to, manifesting to them the light of their eyes, and the stay of their souls. Now to all that have been gathered hither by the Lord, life hath been renewed, and their former experiences (of the Lord and his goodness to them in the Lord Jesus Christ) restored again with advantage. And here they sensibly see, and daily experience, that nothing is of their own works, but all of grace and mercy in and through Christ, in whom they are created unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them. And here the glory is revealed; the glory of life, the glory of peace with the Lord, the glory of righteousness in and through his Son, the glory of victory over the soul's enemies, and of leading captivity captive, and treading upon the necks of kings, even of mighty lusts, which mightily prevailed over and oppressed the soul, before the captain of our salvation appeared in the power and authority of his own Spirit. But blessed be the Lord, there is not only this glory revealed, but there is a defence over the glory; for there is that revealed which is able to defend it, and doth defend it, in the hearts of many, and in the living assemblies which have been gathered by God's holy power; which holy power (which gathered) daily quickens and overshadows, and is a rock unto, and will be so for ever, even to all that abide with him in his holy covenant; but out of the limits of that into which God gathers, and wherein and whereby he preserves, there is no defence to any. The cursed thing, the unclean thing, the earthly spirit, the earthly mind and wisdom, the Lord hath excluded, and it is to be excluded out of his camp for evermore, that the inward Israel may be kept holy to the Lord, and may serve and worship the Lord in the beauty of the inward holiness, as the outward Israel was outwardly, to be, and to do, in that outward ministration of the shadows of the gospel state.

Some Scriptures very sweet, and necessary to be experienced in the Gospel State.

This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, John xvii. 3. There is a knowledge of God and

Christ, which is life eternal : and there is a knowledge of them (or at least that which men call so) which is not life eternal. The knowledge which is life eternal, is that knowledge which God gives to his own birth ; even the spiritual knowledge which God gives to those which are born of the Spirit ; which is the knowledge of the mystery of God, and of Christ in the mystery, inwardly appearing, and working in the heart against the mystery of sin and death. Oh ! precious is the birth to which God gives this knowledge, and precious is the knowledge which he giveth to it. The knowledge (or that which men call knowledge) which is not life eternal, is that knowledge which man can get and comprehend from without, of himself, without the enlightenings and quickenings of God's Holy Spirit and power inwardly felt, and operating in the heart.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 3. It is precious to witness that confessing and acknowledging Jesus to be the Lord, which is by the Holy Ghost. For only they that are governed by the Holy Ghost can so confess him. The devil did confess Jesus to be the Holy One, the Son of the living God, &c. and many now confess Jesus to be the Lord, in the same spirit, being alienated from the life of God, and having no true sense or understanding of that. But there is a confession which cannot arise but from God's Spirit, and from the knowledge, sense, and understanding which he gives ; blessed are they that experience that.

It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me, John vi. 45. Ah ! blessed is he that can in true understanding say, The Lord hath made good this promise to me ! he is become my teacher. I have heard his voice, as truly and certainly, inwardly in my heart, as ever I heard the voice of Satan there. He hath revealed his Son, his pure, holy, living child Jesus in me. He hath drawn me to his Son ; he hath taught me to come to his Son : and indeed so soon as ever I heard and learned of the Father, I could not but come to the Son, and receive the Son, and give up myself to him : and he hath received me, and daily preserveth me from death, and the sting and power thereof, and giveth unto me eternal life.

He that hath the Son, hath life ; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life, 1 John v. 12. Ah ! this is abundantly experienced ! blessed be the name of the Lord ! Many who had not life, while they had not the Son, but mourned and lamented deeply after him (the Spirit of the Lord being grieved in them, and his life not possessed by them) the Father revealing his Son in them, and giving him to them, and they enjoying and possessing him, feel that they are daily in the enjoyment and possession of pure and fresh life in him.

My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him, John vi. 55, 56. We are of his flesh, and of his bone, said they that did eat his flesh, and drink his

his blood. They that eat Christ the one bread, are by that food made partakers of his divine nature, and become one bread (for we being many, are one bread, as said the apostle); so that now they are no longer darkness, but light in the Lord. Oh! the pure flesh and blood of the immaculate Lamb! Oh! the incorruptible food which gives life to the soul! Oh! the living word! Oh! the milk of this word, the milk of the heavenly breast, which nourisheth the babes! but the bread, the flesh, the blood, is stronger nourishment. Oh! how brightly might this be opened, in the demonstration of life, to the spiritual ear and understanding! but the carnal-minded are thick and gross, being drowned in their own apprehensions and sense of the letter, but having no sense of the mystery, what it is mystically to eat and drink the flesh and blood of Christ (of him who is life, and gives life) and to dwell together with him in the one Spirit, light, life, and power eternal.

For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light, Psal. xxxvi. 9. Oh! blessed are they that can experimentally speak thus, who know the fountain of life, and dwell there, where light shines more and more!

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and be that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat: yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David, Isaiah lv. 1, 2, 3. Here's happiness, true happiness, full happiness! He that experiences this one portion of scripture is happy. He that knows the true thirst after the true waters, and comes to the waters which he thirsts after, and knows how to buy, and hath bought the wine and milk which is to be had at the waters (Oh! who knows what this buying is! this is beyond all talk and outward profession concerning the thing, concerning the precious pearl; this is the real, hearty trafficking of the wise merchant for it). And then to hearken diligently, and eat that which is good, and to have the soul delight itself in the fatness of God's house, in the riches and fatness of his goodness and mercy in Christ Jesus; and not only to taste of mercy, but to witness it sure in the everlasting covenant, that God will never be wroth with me more, never be a stranger to me more, never depart from me more, nor suffer me to depart from him; but preserve me pure and chaste to him, through his love shed abroad in my heart, and his holy fear, which constrains me to abide with him, and to keep his commandments.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, John iv. 14. Is not this an universal promise, to be made good to every one that drinks of the water of life, of the water that Christ gives? Did not Christ promise it should be a well? a springing well?

The fountain is of a springing nature: and is not every drop of the same nature? of a living nature? of a springing nature? He that rightly drinks, doth he not receive a well? Oh! the water which Christ giveth! doth it not become a well in the true disciple, in the living disciple, out of which well the water is still springing and flowing, to nourish up with life and unto life, even with life of an everlasting nature, and unto life everlasting. Oh! the pure glory that is revealed in the gospel-dispensation! why is it so hid from mens eyes, who profess themselves to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be his disciples?

For the life was manifested, and we have seen it; and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John i. 2, 3. This is precious to experience the life inwardly manifested, and to come out of death inwardly felt, into life inwardly manifested, and so to come into the holy fellowship with the Father and Son, and with the saints in light: for he that comes out of the darkness into the light, comes out of the fellowship of the dead into the fellowship of the living.

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light, Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30. This invitation of Christ was to be fulfilled in the hearts of his disciples; and it is precious inwardly to witness it effectually in the heart, as really as ever it was spoken by him. To be able to say, in the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit, It is true, I did labour, I was heavy laden, none could ease or help me, till he called, till he knocked at the door of my heart, and till I came to him and received him in; and he hath made good his word to my soul; he hath given me rest from my labours and heavy loads. He hath laid his yoke upon me, and I have took it and borne it, and have learned of him to be meek and lowly in heart like him, and I have found rest to my soul. And now I shall never complain more of his yoke or burthen, he hath made it, and doth daily make it, so easy and light to me.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life, 1 John v. 20. There is an inward, spiritual coming of the Son of God into the heart, by which coming (to them that receive him) he giveth a new and spiritual understanding, whereby they know him that is true (and without it they cannot) and are ingrafted into him and found in him; partaking of his life and righteousness, to the glory of God the Father; and so in true understanding are able to say, *Lo this is the God, this is the Saviour we waited for. This is the true or very God, and eternal life.* What are all notions about

about God, and about his Son Christ Jesus, to this inward sense and experience of them?

God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Oh! how precious is it to be able to witness this in measure! to experience God shining upon my tabernacle (as Job speaks, Job xxix. 2, 3.) and by his light my walking through darkness! It is true, Christ was the light, he had the fullness of light, and the apostles a very great proportion: but, blessed be the Lord, I have received some, and am changed by it, and become light in the Lord; and walk with God, and dwell with God in the light, even as he is light, and dwells and walks in the light. Is not this a blessed testimony? and is not he blessed who can set his seal to it?

Which veil is done away in Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 14. It was promised of old, that in the mountain, where God would make the feast of fat things, he would destroy, swallow up, or do away the veil, or that which veils the life and glory of the Lord from man, and hinders it from being revealed in him, *Isaiah xxv. 6, 7.* Now in Christ there is no veil; in his light, life, spirit, and power, there is no veil: where they are inwardly manifested and received, the veil is done away, and the glory of the mystery revealed and beheld.

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, John viii. 31, 32. What is this word which the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are to continue in? Is it any less than Spirit and life? And what is it to be a disciple indeed, but to learn the law of life at his mouth, and to continue therein? And what is the truth which makes free? Is it not the living Truth (the Word which lives and abides for ever) the powerful Truth, the operative Truth? This cuts between a man and his lovers; this divides between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and makes the soul free from that evil spirit which hath embondaged it. It sanctifieth, it cleanseth, it reneweth, it quickeneth, it giveth strength, it maketh free from the soul's enemies, from the bondage of sin and corruption, and brings into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: and they that are made free from sin by that which is contrary to sin, and which subdues, overcomes, and destroys sin, they doubtless are free indeed. Oh! precious is it to experience this, even the truth that is free from sin, and makes free from sin all that truly know it, and are joined to it, and live and abide in it!

For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi. 14. What's the law? what's the ministration of the law? Is it not the ministration of the letter? of that which is holy and righteous, by an outward or literal command? What's grace? Is it not the inward teacher, which inwardly instructeth to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, &c? Is it not the ministration

stration of the Spirit and power? Is it not the ministration of the new covenant, where the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is written in the heart, and the commandment of life made easy by the power of the Lord Jesus, who manifests himself within to make willing unto, and to strengthen to obedience?

Now they that are under this grace, under this Spirit, under this power, doth it not break the power and dominion of sin in them, and set them free therefrom? Can sin break in upon those who dwell under the shadow of the Almighty? Indeed a man may be under a literal dispensation of holy commands against sin, and yet be under the power of sin: but he that is gathered under the wing of Christ, under the grace and Spirit of the gospel, turned from Satan's power to God's power, and within the wall and bulwark thereof, he witnesseth this true, *Sin hath not dominion, sin cannot have dominion, sin shall not have dominion over you.* No device of the enemy shall be able to hurt or destroy on God's holy mountain; for his light shines there to dispel the darkness, and his power is revealed there, to scatter and dash in pieces the strength of the enemy whenever it appears.

Upon all the glory shall be a defence, Isaiah iv. 5. Oh! the Lord God, by the Spirit and power of the gospel, in the day thereof, is bringing many sons to glory, into great, inward, spiritual glory; yea, into exceeding glory (for the ministration of the Spirit exceeds in glory). And as God hath ordained this glorious ministration for his sons and daughters under the new covenant, so by the Spirit and power of the new covenant, when it breaks forth, he is daily working, translating, and changing them, out of the earthly nature and image, into his own divine nature, into his own heavenly glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And, blessed be the Lord, the defence of his power is spread over the glory of his holy mountain, so that nothing can make a prey of, or devour the birth of life, or deprive of the inheritance of life there. The Lord doth not only give a blessed lot and lines in pleasant places, but he maintains the lot of his children; so that they can dwell in their Father's house, and feed on the heavenly food and rich dainties of the kingdom, in the majesty of the name of the Lord their God; which is such a dread unto the enemies, and such a defence about them, as none can make afraid: but they are kept in perfect peace, in perfect rest, in pure love, out of which life springs and flows continually.

And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song, he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation, Isaiah xii. 1, 2, 3. Oh! precious to witness the inward spiritual day of redemption and deliverance, wherein praises from a living sense naturally spring up to the Lord! to witness the reproofs at an end, the anger, indignation, trouble, and sorrow at an end, and the Comforter come, ministering peace, joy, and comfort to the soul!

Ah!

Ah! when the Lord is felt, the salvation (his presence, his power, his life, his virtue the salvation); when faith springs towards him, and the fear of the enemy (or concerning the enemy) is banished; when he is experienced to be the soul's daily strength against him; yea, and doth so deliver, that instead of the former fear, because of the fury and oppression of the enemy, the soul can now sing, because of that strength and heavenly authority, which the Lord putteth forth and exerciseth in the heart against him! When the well of life, the well of salvation, the Saviour's well, is kept open, and the Philistines, the uncircumcised spirit, power and nature, cast out, that they can stop it no more; but the soul can draw the water of life out of the well and fountain of life with joy; ah! then the gospel-dispensation is indeed known, and the blessed estate thereof witnessed and experienced!

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see, Rev. iii. 18. What is the gold tried in the fire, which man is to buy of Christ, that he may be made rich therewith? What is the white raiment which the soul is to be clothed with, without which it is naked in God's sight, and in the sight of the truly discerning (and there is a time when the shame of its nakedness will appear more generally, as it doth already to the eye of the spiritual man who judgeth all things)? What is the eye-salve wherewith the eye is to be anointed, or it cannot see? Is it not precious to purchase this gold and raiment of Christ, and to have this eye-salve to anoint the eye with, and to keep it open that it may daily see its way, and walk in the light of the Lord? Certainly this is all inward and spiritual, as a remnant witness it this day; glory to the Lord God.

But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him, 1 John ii. 27. The outward anointing was a shadow of the inward, and had a glory in it under the dispensation of the law; and the inward anointing in the gospel-dispensation is spiritual and divine, and exceeding glorious. Christ, the anointed one, anoints all his. No being a son, without being begotten by the Spirit and power of the Father; and no abiding a son, but by the virtue and power of the same Spirit, remaining in and with the soul; so that every son receives of the anointing of the Father: Christ received the Spirit, the fullness, that he might give to them a proportion. Now to experience this anointing, and to experience it abiding and teaching all things; and to know this voice, the voice of the shepherd, the voice of the anointing, which the sheep still finds to be true, and no lie; and to abide in the vine, in the life, in the Spirit, in the power, as this Spirit or anointing teacheth: Oh! here's the sweet state, the clear state, the blessed state! Here the promises and blessings are Yea and Amen in Christ: and

and the soul can say, he is faithful and just who hath promised, who hath opened the treasures of life to his family, to his house, to his children, to his servants, and blest them with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things, in Christ.

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land: mercy and truth are met; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps, Psal. lxxxv. 9. to the end. Is it not precious to witness that fear of God in the heart to which salvation is nigh, and the land wherein glory dwells? Where mercy and truth meet, righteousness and peace kiss? Where truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven? Where God gives that which is good, and the land of the living yields the increase of life to him? Where righteousness goes before him, and he sets his in the way of his steps? Where the Lamb goes before, and the way is not known, but as the Lamb goes before and leads into it? Where God is the shepherd, and the soul doth not want, because he maketh it to lie down in pastures of tender grass, and leadeth by the waters of quietness (where it drinks of the brook in the way) and in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake? See *Psal. xxiii.* Is there not a kingdom of darkness, a land of iniquity inwardly? and do not they that dwell there, and sit there, dwell in darkness, and sit in the region and shadow of death? And is there not a travel out of this land into the holy land (the land of light, the land of the living) and a translation out of this kingdom into the kingdom of the dear Son? And is not God the shepherd there? Christ the bishop of the soul there? and doth not he oversee and take care of souls there, leading them into fresh pastures, and by the soft flowing waters? Is not salvation nigh there, yea, round about that land? Do not mercy and truth meet there? righteousness and peace kiss there? yea, doth not the glory of the Most High dwell in, and overshadow that land? Is not the eye of the Lord upon it for good, from one end of the year to the other? doth not he watch over it night and day, that none hurt it, and water it in the proper seasons? Oh! who can utter the goodness and glory of the Lord which is revealed and shines here!

Rev. iii. 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me. Here are several things, which, in their order and seasons, the living come to a certain and sensible experience of.

As, First, Christ standing at the door and knocking. What is the door at which he stands? and how doth he knock? How doth the contrary spirit knock? how doth his Spirit knock?

Secondly, What is his voice? and how is his voice heard? To hear Wisdom's cry within, in the inward streets; his call at the door, at which he would enter;

enter; must not the true ear in some measure be opened first? Can any one hear without an ear?

Thirdly, What it is to open the door? There is a door-keeper's state to be witnessed, and the right door-keeper knows how to open and how to shut the door, and is exercised in opening and shutting the door. The king of glory is to be opened to, and let in; but no wolf, no stranger, no strange spirit, is to be hearkened or opened to.

Fourthly, What Christ's coming in is at the door opened to him? When he knocks, would he not come in? Would he stand always at the door knocking? Nay, nay; when the door is opened at which he knocks, he who is the resurrection and the life enters; the king of righteousness, the king of peace, enters; he who is the wisdom and power of God enters; and what becomes of the power and goods of the enemy then? Doth he not kill and destroy them? Doth he not consume and devour them? Doth he not empty the house of them, and garnish the house with that which is truly pure, glorious, and beautiful?

Lastly, What is it to have him sup with the soul? And what is it for the soul to sup with him? Is not here eating and drinking in his Father's kingdom? Doth he not first destroy the devil's kingdom, and then set up his own kingdom? And doth he not fast with the soul, and feast with the soul, in the kingdom which he sets up there? Oh! that all men knew how near he who is eternal life is to them! Doth not God search the heart? Is not he near the heart? Doth not his light shine there, in the midst of man's darkness and corruption? Doth not his power reach thither, and assault and trouble the enemy? Doth not his pure love wherewith he loveth man pierce thither? Doth he not knock? Doth he not call? Doth he not touch? Doth he not draw? Doth he not give, at times, some living tender sense to many hearts, who too much neglect and despise him, and regard not the day of his tender visiting them, and calling after them? Oh! how is the love of God, the Spirit of God, the life of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, the drawings and instructions of his grace day by day resisted by the wisdom and will of the flesh, in those that are born thereof, and hearken thereto, and so live after the flesh, and not after that which reproves the flesh?

Many more scriptures might be mentioned, and also sensibly and livingly witnessed to; but these are enough to give a taste. The Lord open mens understandings into the thing itself, and give them the key which opens into the truth, even into the mystery thereof, wherein is the hidden life and virtue. *Amen.*

A few Words concerning the true Christ ; how it may be certainly and infallibly known which is he.

This question relates not to his outward appearance, in the days of his flesh; but to his inward and spiritual appearance, how it may be known. To which the answer on my heart is, Even after the same way, and by the same means is he to be known in his inward appearance, as he was known in his outward; which was by the revealing of the Father. For *none knows the Son but by the Father, and he to whom the Father reveals him.* And when Simon Peter confessed him to be Christ, the Son of the living God, *Blessed (said he) art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,* Matth. xvi. 16, 17.

And if none could know Christ in his appearance in the flesh, notwithstanding so many manifest and express prophecies concerning him, but such only to whom the Father revealed him; how shall any know his inward and spiritual appearance, unless they be taught of the Father, and hear and learn of him so to do?

But more particularly to shew how the Father revealed his Son, and how they came to know in that day that he was the Son of the living God, the Holy One, the anointed Saviour; and that the same way, and by the same means, people that will truly know him, must come to the knowledge of him now;

First, They came to know him by the manifestation of the life that was in him, by the fullness of the grace and truth which dwelt in him, and put itself forth, so as to be discerned by the inward and spiritual eye in them. *For the life was manifested,* 1 John i. 2. The life which was in him was manifested to the spiritual eye which was in them; and thus they came to know him.

Secondly, By his voice and knocks. Thus said he concerning his sheep in those days, *that they knew his voice,* John x. 4. Oh! he hath such a voice, as none hath but he! He speaks in his Father's authority (not as the scribes, not as earthly-wise, learned men); he speaks in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit. The words which he speaks are Spirit and life; they that hear his voice live; and when he stands at the door and knocks, he pierceth deep.

Oh! the beatings of his hand upon the tender and sensible hearts and consciences! Oh! his secret reproofs, his secret instructions, his secret quickenings and enlightenings! How did they, and how do they, eternally make him manifest in the hearts and consciences of his?

Thirdly, By his baptism, or by his baptizing into his own Spirit and power. While people were in expectation, and mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, John answers the case, and tells them how they might discern and know the true Christ. It is not I, who baptize

Baptize with water; but he that baptizeth *with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, &c.* Luke iii. 15, 16, 17. Was not this *then* and is not this *now*, the way to know the true Christ? He that knoweth him who inwardly and spiritually baptizeth, him who hath the fan, who inwardly fanneth and purgeth the floor, gathering in the wheat, and burning up the chaff, doth not he inwardly, truly, and spiritually know Christ? He that knoweth the word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; doth not he know *the word which was in the beginning, which was with God, yea, which was God?* For he is the only searcher of the heart, and trier of the reins.

Fourthly, By his mighty works. *The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me,* John v. 36. And when John sent two of his disciples to Jesus with this question: *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* Christ bids them go, and tell John what things they had seen and heard; *how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached; and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me,* Luke vii. 22, 23. *Why herein is a marvellous thing* (said the blind man) *that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened my eyes,* John ix. 10. He who hath the power, and putteth forth the power inwardly; who openeth the inward eye, the inward ear, looseth the inward tongue, causeth the inward feet to walk in the way of life, and the inward hands to work the works of God; he is the Messiah, the Saviour, the Word of life, the Son of the living God. They that believe in him, in his Spirit, in his power, in his inward appearance, have the witness in themselves, the living testimony, which none can put out, or take away from them. He hath opened mine eyes, he hath opened my heart, he hath raised me out of the grave, he hath given me eternal life. He hath changed me inwardly, created me inwardly, by the working of his mighty power; and I daily live, and am preserved, and grow by the same power. I feel his life, his virtue, his power, his presence day by day. He is with me, he lives in me; and I live not of myself, but by feeling him to live in me, finding life spring up from him into me, and through me; and therein lies all my ability and strength for evermore.

A few Words in the Bowels of tender Love and Good-will to my native Country.

It is written, *When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness.* Oh! that this might be verified concerning thee, O England! even that thou mightest learn righteousness, and that the days of thy unrighteousness might come to an end! Have not God's

judgments been upon thee? Yea, are not God's judgments still upon thee? And can any thing divert them from coming more upon thee, but thy speedy returning unto the Lord, in breaking off thy sins by unfeigned repentance? Oh! that thou mightest be sensible of the hand of the Lord, and mightest hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it! The Lord hath power over all nations, and can break them in pieces as a potter's vessel. They are but as the drop of a bucket, as the small dust of the balance; they are before him as nothing, and are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

Read *Isai.* xxiv. see how God will plead with nations, and consider whether he be not dealing thus with thee? Oh! hath not that been found in thee, and is not that found in thee, which provoketh the Lord exceedingly? Oh! that the weighty sense of thy sins were upon thee, and that thou mightest truly repent, and turn from them; that thou mightest reap the benefit of God's judgments, and learn righteousness, and his indignation might be removed from thee, and his tender bowels of compassion move towards thee.

But perhaps some may say, *What is the righteousness we should learn?*

Ans. Oh! learn to know God; that is a righteous thing. Learn to fear God; learn to worship him aright. How is that? Why in his own Spirit and truth, in which he seeks to be worshipped. Learn humility towards God; learn justice and mercy towards men; learn to love thy enemies. If ye will be Christians, that is the law of Christ; but that which is called the Christian world, many of them have not yet learned so much as to love their friends: but hate and persecute such as fear the Lord, and seek their good, and stand in the gap to keep back the wrath of the Lord from breaking in upon them, and are wrestling mightily with him, with strong cries, that he would stay the sharpness thereof, that it might not break forth to their destruction.

Learn to do to others as ye would be done to. Do not do to any, because of their religion and tender consciences towards the Lord, what ye would not have done to yourselves because of your religion. How long will it be ere ye learn this? How many judgments and distresses shall come upon you, before ye bow in spirit under the mighty hand of God, and yield yourselves in submission to him, to learn these things of him?

Quest. But how shall we learn righteousness?

Ans. Retire inwardly to that, and hearken inwardly to that, which gives the sense of judgments, and learn of that; and that will wean you inwardly from all your unrighteousness, and teach you righteousness. There is that inwardly in the unregenerate which hardens and misleads; there is also that inwardly which tenders, melts, teacheth, and leadeth aright, as it is believed in and obeyed.

Oh! that men knew the difference between these two, and how to turn from the one to the other! For out of the heart proceeds all that is evil and vain,

vain, and out of the heart are the issues of life also. The well or puddle of the muddy waters, of the waters of Egypt, of the wine of Sodom, and waters of Babylon, is there; and the well and cistern of the pure waters is there also.

Oh! my native country, that thou mightest be the first nation in this age of the world that might pass through the judgments of God, and be cleansed thereby, and be happy! Oh! that thy rulers and governors were weaned from the spirit and wisdom of this world, and might receive of God's holy Spirit and wisdom, and judge and govern themselves and the people thereby! When the Jew outward was chosen to be the people of God, did not he pour out of his Spirit to govern them by? Were the judges, kings, and leaders thereof only anointed with outward oil? Were they not also anointed with God's Spirit? And can any Christian magistrate govern aright any Christian nation without the assistance and guidance of the same Spirit? And oh! that all the people were anointed also, that they might be inwardly kings and priests to the Lord, and the kingdom of Christ might be inwardly set up in all their hearts, and every man might reign, in and through him, over the enemies of his own soul! Oh! that the power and glory of the Lord might cover thy governors and inhabitants, O England! Oh! the prayers that have been long put up in bowels of tenderness for thee! Oh! the besom of the Lord, the besom of his righteous judgments, that it might sweep the hearts of men inwardly, that this nation might be prepared for the glory of the Lord (for the glory which he reveals in his heavenly birth) to break forth outwardly, to the admiration and magnifying of the work of his power in the eyes of all beholders!
Amen, Amen.

7 AP 59

THE
F L E S H and B L O O D
O F
C H R I S T,

In the MYSTERY and in the OUTWARD,
Briefly, plainly, and uprightly Acknowledged, and
Testified to;

For the Satisfaction and Benefit of the TENDER-HEARTED,

W H O

Desire to Experience the Quickening, Healing, and Cleansing
VIRTUE of it.

W I T H

A BRIEF ACCOUNT concerning the People called QUAKERS,
in reference both to Principle and Doctrine.

Whereunto are added,

Some few other Things, which, by the Blessing of God, may be experimentally found useful to the true Pilgrims and faithful Travellers out of the Nature and Spirit of this World.

Written in true Love and Tendernefs of Spirit by

I S A A C P E N I N G T O N.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory, 1 TIM. iii. 16.

Of whom are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. ROM. ix. 5.

THE
P R E M I S E S

HAVING been lately at London, upon occasion of a meeting between some of the people called QUAKERS, and some of the people called ANABAPTISTS, and other confederates, wherein I was somewhat concerned, being charged or brought in by Thomas Hicks, in his second book of Dialogues, called *Continuation*, p. 4. to prove, that the QUAKERS account the blood of Christ no more than a common thing; and having been at that meeting to clear my innocency in that particular; but the thing not then coming in question, and I being to return to my habitation in the country (though I staid also a second meeting for that purpose); it was on my heart, in the clearness and innocency thereof, to give forth this testimony, to take off that untruth and calumny of T. H. both from the People called QUAKERS, and myself; being both of us greatly therein injured, as the Lord God of heaven and earth knoweth. I have had experience of that despised people for many years, and I have often heard them (even the antient ones of them) own Christ both inwardly and outwardly. Yea, I heard one of the antients of them thus testify, in a publick meeting many years since, That if Christ had not come in the flesh, in the fullness of time, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and to offer himself up a sacrifice for mankind, all mankind had utterly perished.

What cause then have we to praise the Lord God, for sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for what his Son did therein! O professors! do not pervert our words (by reading them with a prejudiced mind) quite contrary to the drift of God's Spirit by us! If ye should thus read the holy scriptures, yea, the very words of Christ himself therein, and give that wisdom of yours which fights against us scope to comment upon them, and perverts them after this manner, what a strange and hideous appearance of untruth and contradiction to the very scriptures of the Old Testament might ye make of that wonderful appearance of God? For the words

words of Christ seemed so foolish and impossible to the wise men of that age, that they frequently contradicted, and sometimes derided him.

If we be not of God, we shall come to nought; nay, we had not stood to this day, if his mighty power had not upheld us. We could not have stood inwardly, nor could we have stood outwardly, against the fierce assaults we have met with both ways. And as we have not had by-ends to move us inwardly, so neither have we had by-ends to move us outwardly, as our God knoweth.

Oh! T. H. dost thou believe the eternal judgment at the great day, not outwardly only in notion, but inwardly in heart? Oh! then consider how wilt thou answer it to God, for saying so many things in the name of a people, as their belief and words, which never were spoken by any one of them, nor ever came into any one of their hearts! Innocency in me, life in me, truth in me, the Christian spirit and nature in me, is a witness against thee, that thou wrotest thy dialogues out of the Christian nature and Spirit; and thy brethren, William Kiffin and the rest, who have stood by thee to justify thee (or at least seemed so to do) must take notice of these things, and condemn them in thee, or they will expose themselves (and their religion) to the righteous judgment of God, and of all who love truth, and hate forgery and deceit.

I pity thee; yea, I can truly say, I forgive thee the injury thou hast done me (though indeed it is very great, thus to represent me publickly; what thou couldst not have done, if thou hadst equally considered the things written in that book); and I also desire that thou mayest be sensible of what thou hast so evilly done, and confess it before God, that he also might forgive thee. Oh! I would not bear the weight of this sin at the judgment-seat of Christ for ten thousand worlds! And that these books should be so long publick, and thy brethren take no notice of them, but rather at last apply themselves to justify thee, oh! how will they answer this thing, when they come to answer it for ever! Oh! why will ye set up an interest against our Lord Christ (who is the truth, and teacheth truth) and bend all your strength and understanding to make lies, falsehoods, and forgeries to appear as if they were truth, and not forgeries?

If ye will judge yourselves, and repent of these things, ye shall not be condemned of the Lord; but if ye will go on, to cover and hide this great iniquity, ye shall not prosper therein.

As for my particular, I had committed my cause to the Lord, and intended to have been wholly silent, knowing my innocency will be cleared by him in this particular at the great day, and the love, truth, and uprightness wherein I wrote these things owned by him.

But in the love of God, and in the stillness and tenderness of my spirit, I was moved by him to write what follows. And oh! that it would please the Lord to make it serviceable even to T. H. himself, for his good.

THE

FLESH and BLOOD of CHRIST, &c.

IN the second part of Thomas Hicks's *Dialogues* called *Continuation*, p. 4. he maketh his personated Quaker speak thus: *Thou sayest, we account the blood of Christ no more than a common thing; yea, no more than the blood of a common thief.* To which he makes his personated Christian answer thus: *Isaac Penington (who I suppose is an approved Quaker) asks this question; Can outward blood cleanse? Therefore, saith he, we must enquire, whether it was the blood of the veil, that is, of the human nature, or the blood within the veil, viz. of that spiritual man, consisting of flesh, blood, and bones, which took on him the veil, or human nature. It is not the blood of the veil; that is but outward; and can outward blood cleanse?*

Now to satisfy any that desire to understand the truth as it is, and to know what the intent of my heart and words (as spoken by me) was, I shall first say somewhat to his stating the question, and then open my heart nakedly and plainly, as it then was, and still is, in this matter.

First, I answer, these were not my words, which he hath set down as mine; but words of his own patching up, partly out of several queries of mine, and partly out of his own conceivings upon my queries, as if he intended to make me appear both ridiculous and wicked at once. For I nowhere say, or affirm, or did ever believe, that Christ is a spiritual man, consisting of flesh, blood, and bones, which took on him the veil of human nature. Thus he represents me as ridiculous. It is true, Christ inwardly, or as to his inward being, was a Spirit, or God blessed for ever, manifested in flesh; which (to speak properly) cannot have flesh, blood, and bones, as man hath. And then, besides his alterations at the beginning, putting in only four words of my query, and leaving out that which next follows (which might have manifested my drift and intent in them) he puts in an affirmation which was not mine, in these his own words: *It is not the blood of the veil; that is but outward;* and then annexeth to this affirmation of his own, the words of my former query, *Can outward blood cleanse?* As if these words of mine (*Can outward blood cleanse?*) did necessarily infer that the blood of Christ is but a common thing.

Herein

Herein he represents me wicked, and makes me speak, by his changing and adding, that which never was in my heart, and the contrary whereto I have several times affirmed in that very book where those several queries were put (out of which he forms this his own query, giving it forth in my name). For in the 10th page of that book, beginning at line 3. I positively affirm thus: that *Christ did offer up the flesh and blood of that body* (though not only so, for he poured out his soul, he poured out his life) a sacrifice or offering for sin, *a sacrifice unto the Father, and in it tasted death for every man; and that it is upon consideration (and through God's acceptance of this sacrifice for sin) that the sins of believers are pardoned, that God might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus, or who is of the faith of Jesus.* Is this common flesh and blood? Can this be affirmed of common flesh and blood? Ought not he to have considered this, and other passages in my book of the same tendency, and not thus have reproached me, and misrepresented me to the world? Is this a Christian spirit; or according to the law or prophets, or Christ's doctrine? Doth he herein do as he would be done by? Oh! that he had a heart to consider it! I might also except against those words: *human nature* (which he twice putteth in) being not my words, nor indeed my sense; for by human nature, as I judge, is understood more than the body: whereas I, by the word *veil*, intended no more than the flesh (or outward body), which in scripture is expressly so called, *Heb. x. 20. through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*

Secondly, I cannot but take notice of this, that he hath not cited the place, page, or pages; nay, not so much as named the book, where those words or sayings which he attributeth to me are written; whereby any persons that are not willing to take things upon bare report (especially in so deep charges, reflecting not only upon one person, but a whole people), might consult the place, and see whether they were my words or no; and whether the queries I did put (indeed to the hearts of people) had any such drift or no, and might compare the words (if they were mine) both with what went before, and also followed after; and with what was said in several other places of the book, which speak of Christ's flesh and blood as of no common thing, but as that which God makes use of toward the redemption of mankind.

Thirdly, The drift of all those queries in that book was not to vilify the flesh and blood of Christ, by representing it as a common or useless thing, but to bring people from sticking in the outward, to a sense of the inward mystery; without which inward sense and feeling, the magnifying and crying up the outward doth not avail. Indeed, at that time, I was in a great exercise concerning professors: love was deeply working in my heart; and I was in a very tender frame of spirit towards them, as any may perceive; who, in the fear of God and in meekness of spirit, shall read that book (it is intituled, *A question to the professors of christianity, whether they have the true, living, powerful, saving knowledge of Christ, or no, &c.*) And in this

tender frame, in the midst of my crying to God for them, those queries, from a true sense and understanding, sprang up in my heart, even to necessitate them, if possible, to some sense of the mystery, which there is an absolute necessity of unto true christianity and salvation. This was the very intent of my heart in the several queries, which generally speak of one and the same thing, under several metaphors and figures. And that this was my intent, these words following, in the second page of my preface to that book, do plainly express; the words are these: *Now to draw mens minds to a sense of truth, to a sense of that which is the thing, that they might know the bread indeed, that they might know the living waters, come to them and drink thereof, and find Christ in them a well of water springing up to eternal life; therefore was it in my heart to give forth this question and the ensuing queries, which he that rightly answers, must know the thing, and he that doth not know the thing, by his inability to answer, may find that he doth not, and so may wait upon God, that he may receive the knowledge of it, and come to it, for the eternal life which it freely giveth.*

And that I did mean the mystery, when I spake of bread, water, the wine, the live coal from the altar, the leaves of the tree of life, the putting on Christ, the flesh and blood of Christ, &c. is very plain to him that reads singly. But to make it manifest, particularly concerning the flesh and blood of Christ, I shall recite one query; it is the 33d query, page 29. The query is thus: *Is not the true church flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone? Is not the false or antichristian church flesh of Antichrist's flesh, and bone of Antichrist's bone? What is the flesh of the spiritual whore, which is to be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Shall ever the church, which is of Christ's flesh, be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Nay, doth not his flesh make able to abide the devouring fire, and to dwell with the everlasting burnings? Can this possibly be understood of outward flesh and bone? Is it not manifestly intended of flesh and bone in the mystery? Yea, that it did relate to the mystery, in that very query, out of which he takes the four first words, and no more, is very manifest by the following words of the same query. It is the 17th query, page 25. The query runs thus: *Can outward blood cleanse the conscience? Ye that are spiritual, consider; can outward water wash the soul clean? Ye that have ever felt the blood of sprinkling from the Lord upon your consciences, and your consciences cleansed thereby, did ye ever feel it to be outward? It is one thing what a man apprehends (in the way of notion) from the letter concerning the things of God, and another thing what a man feels in Spirit. Is it not manifest, by the express words themselves, that I spake of the inward feeling of the blood in the mystery?**

Fourthly, This query, *Can outward blood cleanse the conscience, &c.* doth not necessarily, nor indeed at all infer, that the blood of Christ, as to the outward, was but a common thing, or useless. If I had been to answer this query myself, he doth not know what my answer would have been. It was put to the professors to answer inwardly in their hearts, who I did believe, upon

upon serious consideration, could not but confess, in way of answer thereto, that outward blood itself (or of itself) could not cleanse and purge away the filth that was inward; but that must be done by that which is inward, living, and spiritual. Then hereby they had been brought to see the necessity of the mystery, the Spirit, the power, the life of the Son, to be inwardly revealed in them; and then I had obtained my end. Nor was I their enemy in desiring or aiming at this for them, or in setting queries before them, which to my eye (as in the sight of God) seemed proper and conducing in themselves (however they might fail as to them) towards the obtaining of this end. And if they could once come to this, to own the flesh and blood in the mystery, and so come to partake of its cleansing and nourishing virtue, and not fix and appropriate that to the outward which chiefly belongs to the mystery; I say, if they could but go thus far with me, in owning the inward life and power in the sensible feeling and operation thereof, I could meet them a great way in speaking glorious things of, and attributing a cleansing or washing virtue to the outward, in, and through, and with the inward. For I do not separate the inward and outward in my own mind; but the Lord opened my heart, and taught me thus to distinguish, according to the scriptures, in love to them, and for their sakes. For that was not my intent to deny the outward, or make it appear as a common or useless thing. There was never such a sense in my heart, nor was ever word written or spoken by me to that end; which, to make more manifest, I shall now plainly open my heart, how it hath been, and is still with me in this respect, since it pleased the Lord and Father of mercies to reveal the mystery of himself and of his Son in me.

In the first place, I freely confess, that I do own and acknowledge, as in God's sight, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, HIS FLESH AND BLOOD IN THE MYSTERY. The apostle Paul speaks of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, *Coloss. ii. 2.* The Son was revealed in him, *Gal. i. 16.* and so he knew the mystery of Christ, and preached the mystery of Christ, *Coloss. iv. 3.* He was made an able minister of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit or mystery; and so he preached the wisdom of God in the mystery or Spirit, *1 Cor. ii. 7.* *2 Cor. iii. 6.* *Coloss. i. 25, 26, 27.* and he had great conflict to bring people to the rich knowledge and acknowledgment of the mystery, *chap. ii. 1, 2.* He was sent to turn men from darkness, and from the power of Satan (which is a mystery, and works in mens hearts in a mystery) to the light, to the Spirit and power of God, which is a mystery also; and remission of sins is received in and through this mystery, *Acts xxvi. 18.* And I desire every serious and tender heart to consider, whether this knowledge of Christ in the mystery, was not that which he called the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord, *Phil. iii. 8.* Certain I am, that the knowledge of God and Christ in the mystery, is the most excellent knowledge, and no less than life eternal, inwardly revealed and felt from God in the heart. And here no legal righteousness,

teousness, no self-righteousness can stand; but the virtue and power of Christ's death and resurrection, inwardly revealed and felt in the mystery, subdues and destroys it all. Indeed self-righteousness may be given up in the way of notion, or seemingly destroyed as to mens apprehensions, without the revealing or working of the mystery; but it cannot be destroyed in reality but where this is felt: but where the mystery is known, is received, and thoroughly works, self-righteousness can have no place there. Now the apostle, who was acquainted with the mystery of Christ, he speaks of his body, flesh, and bones, in the mystery, *Eph. v. 30.* (and if there be flesh and bones in the mystery, is there not also blood in the mystery?) yea, the apostle John speaks of the Spirit, water, and blood, *1 John v. 8.* Now consider seriously, are all these of one and the same nature? or are they of a different nature? the Spirit of one nature, and the water and blood of another nature? Blessed be the Lord, the birth which is born of the Spirit, and is spiritual, knoweth the nature of the Spirit which begat it, and knoweth water which is inward and heavenly, and blood which is not at all of an inferior nature to it: and Jesus Christ, our Lord and teacher, speaketh of flesh which came down from heaven, which flesh is the bread of life, which he that lives, feeds upon, and none can feed upon but they that live. And by this it is manifest (to all to whom God hath given understanding in the mystery) that his flesh and blood in the mystery is intended by him, in that he saith, *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him,* John vi. 56. This dwelling in each other is an effect of the mystery, and is witnessed by none that know not the mystery. And to this effect Christ himself expressly expoundeth it, *ver. 63. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are Spirit, and they are life.* As if he had said, I am speaking of the soul's food; I am speaking of the heavenly bread; I am speaking of Spirit and life; I am speaking of the mystery, which ye look upon and understand as outwardly intended by me, and so miss of the mystery of the Spirit, wherein is the quickening virtue, and look only at the outward body or flesh, which, without the Spirit, profiteth not, nor ever can profit man.

Secondly, I confess further, that I have the sense, experience, and knowledge of this also, that in the mystery is the quickening virtue, the cleansing virtue, the nourishing virtue, unto life eternal. The Spirit, the water, the blood inwardly sprinkled, inwardly poured by God upon the soul, inwardly felt and drunk in by the thirsty earth, do cleanse, do feed, do nourish, do refresh. Doth not God promise to sprinkle clean water upon his Israel in the new covenant, and they shall be clean? and to pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry grounds? Is it not by the spirit of judgment and burning, that God washeth away the filth of the daughter of Sion, &c. *Isai. iv. 4.* Doth not the live coal from the altar purify and take away the iniquity? *Isai. vi.* Oh! read inwardly! Oh! wait to be taught of God to read inwardly, that ye may know what these things mean!

Why

Why should ye quarrel at the precious and tender openings of truth, in love to your souls?

Thirdly, I have likewise this sense, and have also had this knowledge and experience, that the outward without this cannot avail. A man is not cleansed by notions or apprehensions concerning the thing, but by the thing itself. Let a man believe what he can concerning the blood of Christ, and apply to himself what promises he can, yet this will not do (Oh! how grievously do men mistake herein!) but he must feel somewhat from God, somewhat of the new creation in Christ Jesus, somewhat of his light (shining from him the Son into the heart, somewhat of his life, somewhat of his power, working against the darkness and power of the enemy in him. Now a man being turned to this, joined to this, gathered to this standard of the Lord, translated in some degree out of himself into this: here somewhat of the mystery is revealed, and found working in him; and so far he is of God, and hath some true understanding from him. And here also he hath right to Christ's flesh and blood in the outward, and to all the benefits and precious effects that come thereby. For by owning the mystery, and receiving the mystery, we are not taught of God to deny any thing of the outward flesh and blood, or of his obedience and sufferings in the flesh, but rather are taught and enabled there rightly to understand it, and to reap the benefits and precious fruits of it.

Fourthly, The Lord hath shewn me this also, very manifestly and clearly, that in former times (in this nation as well as elsewhere) before professors ran so into heaps (I mean, into several ways and forms of church-fellowship so called) they had more inward sense of the mystery than now they have; and were a great deal more tender (both unto the Lord, and one towards another) than now they are. For then grace in the heart, and the inward feeling, was the thing that was most minded among the stricter sort. They did not mind so much bare reading, or hearing, or praying, or any outward observation whatsoever, as what they felt therein. Let men have spoken ever so many glorious words concerning the things of God; yet, if they had not been spoken warmly and freshly by him that spoke them, there was little satisfaction to the soul that hungered after that which was living, but rather an inward grief and dissatisfaction felt: so that in that day there was an inward sense of the mystery (though not a distinct knowledge of it) which was precious in the eye of God, and very savoury inwardly in the heart. But now, in so long time, by looking so much outward, and beating their brains, and disputing about the outward, many have very much (if not wholly) lost the sense of the inward, and are found contending for the outward, against the very appearance and manifestation of the inward; and so are in danger of being hardened and sealed up in that which is dead and literal, out of the limits of that which is living and spiritual. It is a dreadful thing to fight against the living God, and his living appearance

ance in the hearts of those whom he chuseth, in any age or generation. The Lord hath been pleased to bring us (a poor despised remnant) back to that which first gave us life, in the days of our former profession. Oh! that ye were brought thither also, that that might remove the veil, hardness, darkness, and deep prejudices from you; which can never be removed while ye stick in literal apprehensions, without the light and teachings of God's Spirit! Now as touching the outward, which ye say we deny, because of our testimony to the inward, I have frequently given a most solemn testimony thereto; and God knoweth it to be the truth of my heart; and that the testifying to the inward (from which the outward came) doth not make the outward void, but rather establish it in its place and service. God himself, who knew what virtue was in the inward, yet hath pleased to make use of the outward; and who may contradict or slight his wisdom and counsel therein? Glorious was the appearance and manifestation of his Son in flesh; precious his subjection and holy obedience to his Father; his giving himself up to death for sinners was of great esteem in his eye! It was a spotless sacrifice of great value, and effectual for the remission of sins: and I do acknowledge humbly unto the Lord the remission of my sins thereby, and bless the Lord for it; even for giving up his Son to death for us all, and giving all that believe in his name and power to partake of remission through him.

And seeing it is thus with me: seeing the root of the matter is in me, Oh! how can any man, that hopes to be redeemed by my Lord and Saviour, reproach me for speaking of the mystery, without the least derogation to the outward, or what was done by him in the outward! But if I should speak vehemently concerning mens neglecting the mystery, and setting up that which is outward instead of it and without it, I should not be condemned, but justified of the Lord in so doing. Indeed there is a great and weighty charge from God's Spirit upon the professors of this age, for departing from the inward (I mean that sweet sense, which, in some measure, God gave them in former times of the inward) and magnifying and striving to establish that which they apprehend concerning the outward, without it, and against it. Oh! that it were otherwise with them, that God may not have this charge to manage against them, when at the great day they are to appear before him, and be judged by him! When all that have slighted or spoken contemptuously of his Son's appearance in flesh, and have not come to a sense thereof, and repentance for it, shall be condemned; and they that have slighted or spoken contemptuously of his appearance in Spirit, shall not be justified: which appearance is now made manifest in the hearts of many, blessed be the Lord for it! Oh! what cries have been in my heart many years concerning you, O ye professors of all sorts who have had any tenderness towards the Lord! that ye might see and know the Lord Christ; and confess him in Spirit, in the mystery, even in his inward appearance in
the

the heart, and might feel his redeeming power and virtue there, and so be brought into union and fellowship with him!

The CONCLUSION of the FIRST PART.

THERE is a precious promise of God's making a feast of fat things on his holy mountain, and of destroying there the face of the covering, cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations, *Isaiah xxv. 6, 7.* Now, what is this mountain? Was there not a Mount Sion under the law, which was figurative? and is there not a Mount Sion under the gospel, which is the substance of that figure? and did not the christians in the apostles days, who were called of God and sanctified, come to this Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where they had fellowship with God the judge of all, and with Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, &c. ? *Heb. xii. 22, 24.* And was not the veil here done away in him who was their Lord, their light, their life, their strength, their sun of righteousness, their bright and morning-star? so that with open face they could behold the glory of the Lord, and were changed thereby into his heavenly image, from glory to glory, *2 Cor. iii. 18.*

But alas! how hath that life, Spirit, and power been lost, since the days of the apostles! Men have still owned the apostles words, and formed many notions and apprehensions out of the letter, but lost the apostles Spirit, lost the knowledge of the holy mountain, where the veil is taken away, and where the feast of fat things is made; and so are only dreaming about eating and drinking spiritually, but know not what it is to feed on the living substance. And so (being ignorant of that) the veil is over their hearts while they read the prophets words, and Christ's and his apostles words; and the mystery of life, and of the redeeming power, is hid from their eyes: and that which God intended to them for a table, is become their snare (as it was with the Jews); and their back is so bowed down under the loads and burthens of the enemy, that they cannot so much as hope or believe in the power of life for redemption therefrom, but conclude it must necessarily be so with them all their days.

Oh! where's the faith that gives victory over the enemies? Where's the ability in the faith, so to resist him as to make him fly? Where's Satan's falling like lightening (Oh! his strength before the power of the Lord is but a flash!) and the God of peace his treading him under the feet of his saints? Oh! where's that truth, or that knowledge of the Son, which makes free from him? (*John viii. 32, 36.*) Where's that Spirit wherein liberty from his power and snares is felt? *2 Cor. iii. 17.* Where's living in the Spirit,

Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, and in the pure light of the Lord, where he cannot come? Where's reading of the scriptures in that which gives to witness them, and which fulfils them in the heart?

Oh! the mystery of godliness, the power of godliness, where the life is revealed, and the veil taken away, and an understanding given, opened, and kept open, to read and understand the scriptures aright; yea, and the hidden glory also! Where it cannot be said in truth to those that are there, Ye know not the scriptures, nor the power of God; but ye have received power to become sons of God, and ye are in him that is true; who truly opens the scriptures in your hearts, and gives you the enjoyment, inheritance, and possession of the precious promises, whereby ye are made partakers of the divine nature, and live in him who is the head and spring of that nature. Oh! that people that profess Christ were here! Oh! that they did know him who begets! and then they would not be so ignorant of those that are begotten by him; but would come into the true faith, into the true love, into the true knowledge and obedience of him, whom God hath appointed to guide and govern, and build up the whole living body. The Lord guide me inwardly thither, where the mystery is revealed, and the fellowship with God, and his Son and saints, held in the mystery! For our fellowship is not in a notional knowledge concerning Christ, but in the life itself; which the Lord God gather his people more and more into, and build them more and more up in. *Amen.*

A
B R I E F A C C O U N T

C O N C E R N I N G

The P E O P L E called Q U A K E R S,

I N

Reference both to P R I N C I P L E and D O C T R I N E.

We are a People of God's gathering, who (many of us) had long waited for his Appearance, and had undergone great Distress for want thereof.

Quest. **B**UT some may say, *What appearance of the great God and Saviour did ye want?*

Answ. We wanted the presence and power of his Spirit to be inwardly manifested in our spirits. We had (as I may say) what we could gather from the letter, and endeavoured to practise what we could read in the letter; but we wanted the power from on high, we wanted life, we wanted the presence and fellowship of our beloved; we wanted the knowledge of the heavenly seed and kingdom, and an entrance into it, and the holy dominion and reign of the Lord of life over the flesh, over sin and death in us.

Quest. *How did God appear to you?*

Answ. The Sun of righteousness did arise in us, the day-spring from on high, the morning-star did visit us, insomuch that we did as really see and feel the light and brightness of the inward day in our spirits, as ever we felt the darkness of the inward night.

Quest. *How did God gather you?*

Answ. By the voice of his Son, by the arm of his Son, by the virtue of his Son's light and life inwardly revealed and working in our hearts. This loosed us inwardly from the darkness, from the bonds of sin and iniquity, from the power of the captiver and destroyer, and turned our minds inwardly towards our Lord and Saviour, to mind his inward appearance, his

inward shinings, his inward quickenings; all which were fresh from God, and full of virtue. And as we came to be sensible of them, join to them, receive and give up to them, we came to partake of their virtue, and to witness the rescuing and redeeming of our souls thereby. So that by hearing the Son's voice, and following him, we came to find him the way to the Father, and to be gathered home by him to the Father's house, where is bread enough, and mansions of rest and peace for all the children of the Most High.

Now as touching the blessed principle of truth, which we have had experience of, and testify to (for how can we conceal so rich a treasure, and be faithful to God, or bear true good-will to men!) it is no new thing in itself, though of late more clearly revealed, and the minds of men more clearly directed and guided to it, than in former ages. It is no other than that which Christ himself abundantly preached, who preached the kingdom, who preached the truth which makes free, and that under many parables and resemblances; sometimes of a little seed, sometimes of a pearl or hid treasure, sometimes of a leaven or salt, sometimes of a lost piece of silver, &c. Now what is this, and where is this to be found? What is this which is like a little seed, a pearl, &c. and where is it to be found? What is the field? Is it not the world, and is not the world set in man's heart? What is the house which is to be swept, and the candle lighted in? Is it not that house, or heart, where the many enemies are? A man's enemies, saith Christ, are those of his own house. Indeed the testimony concerning this was precious to us; but the finding and experiencing the thing testified of to be according to the testimony, was much more. And thus we say in perfect truth of heart, and in most tender love to the souls of people, that whoever tries, shall find this little thing, this little seed of the kingdom, to be a kingdom, to be a pearl, to be heavenly treasure, to be the leaven of life, leavening the heart with life, and with the most precious oil and ointment of healing and salvation. So that we testify to no new thing, but to the truth and grace which was from the beginning; which was always in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, and dispensed by him in all ages and generations, whereby he quickened, renewed, and changed the heart of the true believers in his inward and spiritual appearance in them, thereby destroying the enemies of his own house, and saving them from them. For indeed there is no saving the creature, without destroying that in the creature, which brings spiritual death and destruction upon it. Israel of old was saved by the destroying of their outward enemies; and Israel now (the new Israel, the inward Israel) is saved by the destruction of their inward enemies. Oh! that people could come out of their own wisdom, and wait for God's wisdom, that in it they might come to see the glory, the excellency, the exceeding rich virtue and treasures of life, that are wrapped up in this principle or seed of life; and so might receive it, give up to it, and come to partake thereof.

And

And as touching doctrines, we have no new doctrines to hold forth. The doctrines held forth in the holy scriptures are the doctrines that we believe. And this doth farther seal to us our belief of this principle, because we find it a key by which God openeth the scriptures to us, and giveth us the living sense and evidence of them in our hearts. We see and have felt in it to whom the curse and wrath belongs; and to whom the love, mercy, peace, blessings, and precious promises belong; and have been led by God's Holy Spirit and power through the judgments to the mercy, and to the partaking of the precious promises. So that what should we publish any new faith, or any new doctrines for? Indeed we have none to publish; but all our aim is to bring men to the ancient principle of truth, and to the right understanding and practice of the ancient apostolick doctrine and holy faith once delivered to the saints. Head-notions do but cause disputes; but heart-knowledge, heart-experience, sense of the living power of God inwardly, the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit in the inward parts, puts an end to disputes, and puts men upon the inward travel and exercise of spirit by that which is new and living, which avails with God. Now whereas many are offended at us, because we do not more preach doctrinal points, or the history of Christ, as touching his death, resurrection, ascension, &c.; but our declaration and testimony is chiefly concerning a principle to direct and guide mens minds thereto; to give a plain account of this thing, as it pleaseth the Lord to open my heart at this time in love and good-will to satisfy and remove prejudices where it may be; thus it is in brief,

First, That which God hath given us the experience of (after our great loss in the literal knowledge of things) and that which he hath given us to testify of, is the mystery, the hidden life, the inward and spiritual appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, revealing his power inwardly, destroying enemies inwardly, and working his work inwardly in the heart. Oh! this was the joyful sound to our souls, even the tidings of the arising of that inward life and power which could do this! Now this spiritual appearance of his was after his appearance in the flesh, and is the standing and lasting dispensation of the gospel, even the appearance of Christ in his Spirit and power inwardly in the hearts of his. So that in minding this, and being faithful in this respect, we mind our peculiar work, and are faithful in that which God hath peculiarly called us to, and requireth of us.

Secondly, There is not that need of publishing the other as formerly was. The historical relation concerning Christ is generally believed and received by all sorts that pretend to Christianity. His death, his miracles, his rising, his ascending, his interceding, &c. is generally believed by all people; but the mystery they miss of, the hidden life they are not acquainted with, but alienated from the life of God, in the midst of their literal owning and acknowledging of these things.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The knowledge of these, without the knowledge of the mystery, is not sufficient to bring them unto God; for many set up that which they gather and comprehend from the relation concerning the thing, instead of the thing itself, and so never come to a sense of their need of the thing itself, nay, not so far as rightly to seek after it. And so many are builders, and many are built up very high in religion, in a way of notion and practice, without acquaintance with the rock of ages, without the true knowledge and understanding of the foundation and corner-stone. My meaning is, they have a notion of Christ to be the rock, a notion of him to be the foundation-stone; but never come livingly to feel him the rock, to feel him the foundation-stone, inwardly laid in their hearts, and themselves made living stones in him, and built upon him, the main and fundamental stone. Where is this to be felt but within? And they that feel this within, do they not feel Christ within? And can any that feel him within, deny him to be within the strength of life, the hope of glory? Well, it is true once again (spiritually now, as well as formerly literally) *the stone which the builders refused* (Christ within, the builders of this age refuse) *is become the head of the corner*, who knits together his sanctified body, his living body, the church, in this our day, more gloriously than in the former ages and generations, blessed be the name of our God.

Fourthly, The mystery, the hidden life, the appearance of Christ in Spirit, comprehends the other: and the other is not lost or denied, but found in it, and there discerned or acknowledged more clearly and abundantly. It was to be after it, and comprehends that which went before it. Paul did not lose any thing of the excellent knowledge of Christ, when he said, *Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more.* If he did not know Christ after the flesh, how did he know him? Why as the Father inwardly revealed him. He knew him in his Spirit and power. He knew his death inwardly, he knew his resurrection inwardly, he knew the Spirit, the virtue, the power of it inwardly; he knew the thing in the mystery in his own heart. Oh! precious knowledge! Oh! the excellency of this knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! What is the outwardly most exact literal knowledge without this? But what then? Do I now deny or slight the outward? No; I have it here, and I have the inward feeling of the Spirit of life, how it dwelt in him, how it wrought in him, and of what wonderful value all his actions and obedience were, in and through the virtue of this Spirit. Was Abraham's offering his son so precious in God's eye? Oh! then what is this! Never was such a body so sanctified, so prepared; never such a sacrifice offered. Oh! the infinite worth and value of it! For by the inward life and teachings of God's Spirit am I taught and made able to value that glorious outward appearance and manifestation of the life and power of God in that heavenly flesh (as in my heart I have often called it) for the life so to dwell in it, that it was even one with it. Yet still

still it was a veil, and the mystery was the thing, and the eye of life looks through the veil into the mystery, and passes through it, as I may say, as to the outward, that it may behold its glory in the inward. And here the flesh of Christ, the veil, is not lost, but is found and known in its glory in the inward. Be not offended at me, O tender-hearted reader! for I write in love things true, according to the inward feeling and demonstration of God's Spirit, though not easy perhaps to be understood at present by thee; but in due time the Lord can make them manifest to thee, if thou in uprightness and tenderness of heart, and in the silence of the fleshly part, wait upon him.

A few WORDS concerning the WAY of PEACE.

The way of peace they have not known, Rom. iii. 17.

THERE is a way of peace, of true peace with God, who is an adversary to all that is unholy and unrighteous. Those who have been unholy and unrighteous, who have been awakened, troubled, and could find no rest, but the severe and righteous judgments and wrath of the Lord lying upon their spirits night and day, having at length had their ears opened by him, and being led by him out of the unholy and unrighteous way, into the holy and righteous way, have felt both life and peace therein.

Now there are two sorts which the apostle here mentions (or two states, which the apostle here speaks of) which have not known, nor can know, the way of peace with God, who is an adversary to them both, and will one day speak trouble to them both, when their souls and consciences come to be searched and judged by him.

The one is the profane, or Gentile state, which is without the sense of God, not heeding any appearance of his, or any inward voice of his Spirit, or the writing of his law upon their heart. These never knew the way wherein the heart is inwardly and spiritually circumcised and renewed, sin forgiven, and peace obtained.

The other is the professing or outward Jews state, who may study the letter, and apply themselves to conform outwardly to the letter, but never were acquainted with the inward Spirit and power. These greatly differ from the Gentile or profane state, both in outward appearance, and in their own eye; but are the same in the ground with the Gentiles, and know no more of the way of peace than the other do.

Quest. *But what is the way of peace, which neither the profane, nor any sort of professors out of the life and power, ever knew, or can know?*

Answer.

264 *A few Words concerning the Way of Peace.*

Ans. It is an inward way, a way for the inward Jews, for the inwardly-renewed and circumcised to walk in. It is an holy or sanctified way, for the sanctified-ones to walk in. It is a living way, which none but the living can find. It is a new way, which none but those to whom God hath given the new eye can see. It is a way that God prepares and casts up, and leads mens spirits into (who hearken unto him) and guides the feet of his saints in. It is a strait and narrow way, which no lust of the flesh, nor wisdom of the flesh can find out, or enter into. Oh! how little, how low, how poor, how empty, how naked, must he be, that enters into this way, and walks therein! Many may seek after it, and may think to find it, and walk in it; but few shall be able, as our Lord Christ said. Here circumcision outward avails not; here want of that circumcision hinders not; here bodily exercise profits little. The new creature is all here; the cross of Christ is all here; the power of God is all here; and he that walks according to this rule, peace is upon him, and the whole Israel of God. But he that knows not this rule, nor walks according to this rule, peace is not upon him, nor is he one of the inward Israel of God, who receive power to become sons, who receive the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is the inward rule of the inward Israel.

This was the way of peace from the beginning; this is the way of peace still; and there is not another. To be new created in Christ Jesus, to be ingrafted into him, to abide in him, to have the circumcision of the flesh (the body of the sins of the flesh cut off) by the circumcision of Christ (made inwardly in the heart without hands), and to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, even in the newness of the Spirit, here is life and peace, rest and joy for evermore. The Lord of his tender mercy give me a sense of it, and lead me into it more and more. *Amen.*

THE CONCLUSION of the WHOLE.

THERE is a birth which is born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but of God, *John* i. 13. And this birth, which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, *chap.* iii. 6. Now this birth, which is born of the Spirit, and is Spirit, hath a life and way of knowledge suitable to its nature and being; which is very far above man. Its life is in the Spirit, and its walking in the Spirit, and its knowledge is after the way of the Spirit, very far above man's way of conceiving or comprehending. The birth itself is a mystery to man, and its way of knowing is a way altogether hid from man. It is indeed in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, in the shinings of his light in the heart: *In thy light shall we see light.* The birth knows what this means. There is a wise and prudent part in man, from which God hides the sight of his kingdom, and the heavenly glory thereof; but there is a babe to which God reveals

reveals the mystery thereof. Flesh and blood cannot reveal; but the Father can and doth to his children, who is the teacher of them all, from the least to the greatest, in the new and living covenant. There is man's day, and there is God's day. There is man's day of gathering knowledge, after his fleshly manner of comprehending; and there is God's day of giving knowledge, by the shinings of the light of his own eternal Spirit. In man's day, how doth wise and prudent man beat his brains, and labour in the fire for very vanity! But in God's day, how doth the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea! When the day-spring from on high visits inwardly, when the Lord lighteth the candle inwardly, oh! how clear is the knowledge of the Lord, and how doth it abound then! Oh! what a difference there is between man's apprehensions and conceivings concerning Christ, and God's revealing him inwardly; and between man's coming to Christ, according to his own apprehensions, and his coming to Christ in the heavenly drawings and teachings of the Father! *John vi. 45.* Oh! that the begettings of life and the birth thereof were felt in men's hearts, that in it men might know the day of God, and the kingdom of God, and the treasures of wisdom which are hid in Christ, and will ever be so, but as Christ is inwardly revealed and formed in the heart! Many may have notions of Christ being formed in them; ah! but to feel it inwardly! there is the sweetness, there is the assurance, there is the life, there is the peace, there is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is the joy of the true Christian for ever. Come, oh! come, all sorts of tender professors, out of yourselves, into God's Spirit, into God's truth, that ye may know what it is to be in the Spirit, and in the truth, and what it is to live there, and to know things there, and to worship there, and to have fellowship with the Father and Son there. The poor receive the gospel, the poor receive the kingdom, the poor receive the power, the poor receive the righteousness and salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ye are too rich in your comprehensions and gathered knowledge from your own literal conceivings, to learn to wait aright, to receive of him his gold, his raiment, and his eye-salve. What pleasure is it to us to testify against you? Were it not for obedience to our God, and love to your souls, we would never do it. We are content and satisfied to be of the little despised flock, which the shepherd feeds, giving to every one his proportion of daily nourishment, life, peace, righteousness, and joy. It is our love to you that we would not have you lay out your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which will not satisfy the truly hungry and awakened soul, but might come to feed on substance, on the life itself, on the sweetness and fatness of God's house, where nothing that any of his children can need or long after is wanting. Oh! that ye had the sense of our love! If ye had the true understanding and sense of God's love, ye could not but have a sense of our love also; for it comes from him, and it flows towards you in his will and tender movings. Do ye love God? Are your hearts circumcised to love

God? If not, ye do not truly love. And if ye loved him that begets, ye would love them that are begotten by him. Your love is to your own notions and apprehensions of God, not to his nature; for if ye loved his nature (that holy, heavenly, spiritual nature as it is in him) ye could not but love it in his children also. Well, our God is love, and taught us to love even our enemies, and to wrestle with our God for them, that, if it be possible, the Lord may remove the scales from their eyes, and give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Jesus, where it is more living and powerful, more effectual and operative (inwardly purifying, sanctifying, yea, and justifying also) than any but those only that are born of God (and kept alive by him), yet ever knew, or can know.

P O S T S C R I P T.

Containing a few Words concerning the Doings and Sufferings of that despised People called QUAKERS, which are both misunderstood and misrepresented by many: With an Exhortation to true Christianity.

FIRST, their doings are looked upon by many to be from a natural principle, and according to the covenant of works, and not from the free grace and gift of God's Spirit.

Now concerning this I can speak somewhat faithfully, as having been long experienced in the principle, and as having had experience of the grace and tender mercy of the Lord from my childhood. And indeed thus it hath been with me from my childhood; whatever hath been done in me, or by me, that was good, I have felt to be from God's grace and mercy to me, and have cried grace, grace, mercy, mercy, to the Lord continually therefore. And when I was turned to his truth in the inward parts, I found it was God's grace and tender love to me to turn me to it, and to preserve me, being turned; and to cause it to spring in me day by day, and to give me ability through it. Ah! none knows but they that have had experience how we have been weakened in the natural part; how poor we have been made, that we might receive the gospel, and how poor in ourselves we are kept, that we might enjoy the riches and inheritance of the kingdom. And this we daily experience, that not by the works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, and doth daily save us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Yea, God's writing his law in our hearts, and placing his fear there, and putting his Spirit within us, to enlighten and quicken, and cause us to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and do them, and all the mortifying of sin, and denying of the lusts of the flesh, and performing that

that which is holy and acceptable in the eyes of the Lord (as all that proceeds from his own Holy Spirit is) all that is of the new covenant, and performed by the working thereof, and not by the working of the natural part of itself, but by the working of the Spirit of life in the new-birth, and through the natural part as his instrument. So let none reproach the works that God brings forth in us, who hath created us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, lest thereby he reproach the Holy Spirit and power of the living God, in which they are wrought, and by which they are brought forth, and could never be brought forth without it.

Then for our sufferings, indeed they are gifts we received from God, so that we can truly say, it is given us by the Lord our God not only to believe in his Son, but to suffer for his sake; and that it is only in good conscience to God, and by the assistance of the Lord, that we suffer; that the patience and meekness wherewith we suffer, is not of ourselves, but of him. Whenever the Lord permits afflictions or sufferings to come upon us, our eye is to him, and we enter into them in his fear, knowing our own inability to go through them, and looking up to him for strength. And when we are in them, while they continue, we daily look up to him for strength, and have been many times very weak in ourselves, when immediately, or very soon after, we have felt great strength in the Lord. Also after our sufferings, when the Lord hath been with us all along, and brought us through our sufferings in the peace and joy of his Spirit, we do not look back boastingly, as if we had been any thing, or done any thing as of ourselves; but we bow before the Lord, and bless the Lord, when we consider how he hath been with us, and how he hath upheld us by the right-hand of his righteousness; and what he hath done for us when we were very poor, weak, afflicted, and often sorely distressed. Therefore let none reproach, misrepresent, or vilify our sufferings, which our God hath helped us through, and for which we (in humility of heart) give him thanks, and cannot but do so all our days, because the thankful remembrance and sense of them is written by the finger of his Spirit upon our hearts. Oh! all sorts of people, whom we love and travail for, and use our interest in the Lord our God for, that ye might be truly sensible of your conditions, know the inward appearance and visits of the Shepherd and Saviour of the soul, turn to him (looking in true faith unto him) and be saved! I say unto you, in tenderness of spirit, oh! do not requite us so ill for our love and truth of heart towards you, as to cast untrue and unjust reproaches upon us, and to render that truth vile which God hath made honourable, in sanctifying and redeeming many thereby. Truly our love is from the God of love. We could not so love you as we do, if our God had not taught us; nor so seek after you as we do, in tenderness of bowels, if we were not instruments in the hand of the shepherd of Israel. And the light we testify of, which we feel shine in us, it is no less than the true sure light of the sun of righteousness, which God hath caused to shine in our hearts; who also loveth mankind,

and causeth it to glance into the darkest corners of the earth. And the life we are quickened by out of sin and transgression, and the power we have received to become sons of God, it is from him who is the fountain of life, and hath all power in heaven and earth. Oh! that ye could receive the blessed report! Oh! that the arm of the Lord might be revealed in you! Oh! that ye could feel and witness the Saviour working out your salvation in you, binding the strong man in you, casting him out of you, with all his goods after him, that the place of the wicked-one might be found no more in you, nor none of his lusts or vain thoughts lodge in your hearts any more; but ye might witness and experience the new heart, the clean heart, the pure heart, in which God dwells, and the eye that sees him that is invisible. Oh! glory to the Lord for what he hath done in and for a despised people (who were no people before the Lord made them one) who hath brought them to Sion, his holy mountain, where he dwells and reigns, and where he builds up his own house and temple, which he establisheth over all; where the sheep of Israel feed, and where the Shepherd of Israel reigns and triumphs in glory over the enemies of his kingdom. The little innocent babes taste somewhat of his holy dominion and power, and of his kingdom of peace and righteousness; but in his antients his light shines very brightly, and before them he reigneth gloriously; so that he is praised in the very heights of Sion, and his name renowned there over all for ever. Glory, glory to the pure spring of life, from whence the living streams come which refresh the souls of the living. Surely his pure praises shall be founded in the hearts of the living for ever and ever. *Amen.*

AN EXHORTATION to true CHRISTIANITY.

It is easy to pretend to CHRIST; but to be a true Christian is very precious, and many Tribulations and deep Afflictions are to be passed through before it be attained unto, as those who are made so by the Lord experience.

NOW everlasting happiness and salvation depends upon true Christianity. Not upon having the name of a Christian only, or professing such or such Christian doctrines; but upon having the nature of Christianity, upon being renewed by the Spirit of Christ, and receiving the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. Oh! here is the Christian indeed! and it should be every one's care not to fall short of this. Now because there is a contention about Christianity, who is the right Christian, it behoves every man to take care as to himself that he be really such;

such; that he receive that from God, and be that to God, which none but the right Christian can be, or can receive. This is the use I would make of these things in my own heart, even to be sure I be such an one as God hath made, and will accept and own as a Christian. And having had some experience of this thing, and truly understanding what the Christian state is, and what doth attend it, I shall set down some few things, which he that inwardly knoweth, witnesseth, and enjoyeth, is without all controversy a true Christian, whatever man may account of him.

First, He that is a new creature, is without doubt a true Christian. He that is regenerated, he that is renewed in the spirit of his mind by Christ Jesus, he that is new-created in the holy and heavenly image, he has felt the power of God's Spirit begetting him anew, forming him anew, out of the old nature and image of the first Adam, into the nature and image of the second Adam, who is the quickening Spirit; and that which is begotten and born of him is Spirit.

Secondly, He that is in the new covenant, is a true Christian. He that hath thirst after the living waters, and hath heard the call to the waters of life, hath heard the voice of him who gives life, and hath received life from him, who giveth life to all that come to him, and who maketh the new and everlasting covenant with all that hear his voice, take up his cross and follow him, he is without doubt one of Christ's sheep, whom the shepherd owneth, and taketh care of.

Thirdly, He that is inwardly circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, he is a Jew inward, a Christian inward (in the sight of God) who hath felt the Spirit and power of Christ Jesus, and rejoiceth in Christ Jesus, and is one of those worshippers whom God hath sought out and taught to worship him in the life and Spirit of his Son.

Fourthly, He that is inwardly washed with clean water, with the inward water, he is the inward Jew, the inward Christian. God promised to pour out clean water upon his Israel, and they should be clean. He who hath the clean water poured upon him inwardly, which inwardly washeth and cleanseth, he is without controversy one of God's inward Israel.

Fifthly, He that feeds on the bread of life within, and drinks the water of life out of his own well or cistern, he without doubt is living. He that is invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and comes and sups with the Lamb, he is one of the same nature and Spirit with him. He with whom Christ sups, who hath heard Christ knocking at his door, hath opened to him, and received him in, to purify his heart, and dwell in him, and sup with him, and give him to sup with himself, so that he eats bread in the kingdom, and drinks wine in the kingdom, and partakes of the feast of fat things, which God makes to his Israel in his holy mountain, he is without doubt one of Christ's, and partakes of this in and through him.

Sixthly, He that lives the Christian life, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; who doth not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but hath the

law

law of God written in his heart, and his fear put within him, and his Holy Spirit given to instruct him, and to guide him to answer the holy law written in his heart, which the carnal mind is not subject to, nor can be subject to, without doubt he is spiritual; without doubt he is a true Christian.

Seventhly, He that lives by faith, who knows the faith which is the gift of God, hath received it, and lives by it; who can do nothing of himself, but only by faith in that holy power which doth all in him; so that he lives, and believes, and obeys from an holy root of life, which causeth life to spring up in him, and love to spring up in him, and the Lamb's meekness and patience to spring up in him, and all grace to spring up in him; I say, he that lives thus, without doubt is ingrafted into the true vine, into the true olive-tree; and the root bears him, and ministers sap unto him, and he is a true, fresh, green, living branch of the true vine, of the holy olive-tree.

Many more things might be mentioned, as they are experimentally known and felt amongst us, who are true Christians; though the Baptists and others have represented us to the world as if we were no Christians: but that touching us not, their saying so is no more to us than the professing Jews of the same spirit, who said Christ had a devil. But these are to give a taste; and he that knows and feels these, may also know and feel the rest, if ever so many more should be mentioned. Now the way to feel these, and to become a true Christian (and to grow up in the Christian life) is to feel the seed of the kingdom, which is the beginning of the kingdom, the beginning of true Christianity; and then to feel the seed abiding (the seed which is of the Spirit, and which is Spirit), here is the constant seal of Christianity in my heart; here are true and certain evidences, day by day, of the Christian nature and spirit manifesting themselves undeniably inwardly.

And now having the witness in myself, the testimony of him that begat life in me, testifying to his own work, and to his own birth, of what value are any testimonies of men without, against this? Christianity is a mystery, and he only can truly see who is a Christian indeed, who hath the inward eye opened, and with that inward eye is taught of God to pierce into that wherein Christianity consisteth. There have been many Christians of mens making; there are also some Christians of God's and Christ's making; which Christians God and Christ will own, but not the other. Oh! let men have a care, that when God cometh to distinguish between cattle and cattle (between Christian and Christian) they be found such as God will make up as his jewels, and own as the sheep of his fold; such as shall be able to bear the trial of his searching judgment, and pure impartial eye; and not such as still, notwithstanding all their profession of religion and Christianity, are found workers of iniquity, and so not created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, and therefore not truly of him, nor true Christians in his eye.

TO THE
J E W S N A T U R A L,
AND TO THE
J E W S S P I R I T U A L;

WITH A

FEW WORDS to ENGLAND, my native Country, &c.

Some sensible, weighty **QUERIES**, concerning some Things very sweet and necessary to be experienced in the truly Christian State.

Whereunto is added,

A **POSTSCRIPT**, containing some **Queries** on *Isaiab* l. 10, 11. A Scripture of deep Counsel and Concern to the darkened and distressed States of some among those that fear and obey the Lord.

Whereunto are added,

Two or three **Queries** touching the River and City of God, and the pure Stillness, wherein God is known and exalted.

A S A L S O,

Some **QUESTIONS** answered concerning the true Church, Ministry, and Maintenance under the Gospel, and about the Lamb's War.

Written in travailing Bowels, by

I S A A C P E N I N G T O N.

Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are of a clean heart, **PSAL.** lxxiii. 1.

Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile, **JOHN** i. 47.

For he is not a Jew that is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God, **ROM.** ii. 28, 29.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised, with the uncircumcised, Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners that dwell in the wilderness; for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart, **JER.** ix. 25, 26.

THE
P R E F A C E.

WHAT a day of distress, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, is to come upon the wicked and ungodly world (even upon man, who was created in the image of God, but is now fallen from it, and found out of it, and in another image very unlike it); the eye which the god of this world hath blinded, and the heart which he hath hardened by sin and transgression, hath no sense of.

What a day of distress and misery some in this nation (and in other parts of the world) have already met with! how they have felt the weight of sin upon their spirits, and what a sore thing it hath been to them to feel their souls separated from that God that made them (who is the Husband and Father, King, and Preserver of souls, that are found in his image and nature); how they have been inwardly captivated by a foreign power, and oppressed, and made to serve under sin, and could hear no effectual tidings of his appearance who was able to save, but their spirits were ready to sink, and their hope of redemption, from that which oppressed and captivated them, almost cut off; this being an inward state and condition, hath been altogether hid from the eye which is outward.

How the Lord at length appeared unto these (his bowels having long rolled over them, and he having long waited to be gracious to them, even till the full and acceptable set time was come); how his light hath shined in and upon them; how he gathered those dry bones together, and breathed life into them, and made them live: this also is altogether an hidden thing from the eye of the world.

How the Lord, who appeared to them, hath exercised and tried them; how he hath judged them, and how he hath saved them; what desolations he hath made inwardly in them, and what he hath built there: what an hammer, a sword, a fire, &c. his pure word of life hath been in them; how that birth which could live without God, without his inward life, or upon words and knowledge without life, hath been famished, until, by the pain of the famine, its very life and breath hath been taken from it, and it crucified with Christ, by the pain of the cross of Christ: and what birth hath been

been raised and crowned afterwards, and beautified with the ornaments of righteousness and salvation; yea, with the endless love and mercy with its God; and how the Lord is with his people, and dwells and walks in them, and how he hath humbled them to walk with him; and how in fear and humility they do walk with him in the light of day everlasting, even as God is Light, and walks in the light of his own day: these are very strange and unknown things to the wisest and most prudent in religion at this day, who are not gathered into the mystery of godliness (nor into the Spirit, power, and glory of the Father) where these things are revealed in and by the Son.

What faith the children of wisdom have in the wisdom and power which hath appeared: what confidence they have in the Lord their God; that he will stand by them in all their exercises and trials, both inward and outward; and what experiences they have had of the Lord's standing by them in both: how his faithfulness doth not fail; and how their faith in him is upheld and preserved by him, that it doth not fail in the stormy time, or hour of greatest distress; and how their eye is unto him, and their hearts with him in the calms; so that their God is all in all unto them continually: (and who knows this but they that have it!) Oh! who can utter or declare the sweetness and certainty of this, where it is enjoyed!

What love also the Lord sheds abroad in their hearts; and how he teacheth and causeth them to love, by often circumcising their hearts, and cutting off that which hindereth the pure love from springing in them; and how they love others, in the love wherewith God (who is Love) hath loved them; and how natural it is to them to pray for their enemies, and to bless them that curse them, and do good for evil; but cannot requite evil for evil, being transplanted into, and growing up in, the root that is good; and sends up good sap and virtue into them, which nourisheth all that is good in them, but is death and destruction to the remainders of evil, as the Lord pursueth and findeth it out: Oh! how impossible is it for the heart of man to conceive and understand!

Now I also having tasted of the mercy and goodness of the Lord, and having been brought out of a state of great misery and sorrow of heart into the redemption and joy of God's chosen; and having found the Lord faithful to me, and giving me faith in the appearance of his Spirit and power in me, and true love (tender love) not only to my brethren in the truth, but to all mankind springing in me, and divers fruits issuing forth from it; some of them at this time I cannot but publish, and the Lord open the hearts of those whom it concerns, that they may find some help, benefit, and furtherance by it. For it is the joy of my heart to receive good from God; to be filled with his blessings, to have my cup overflow; and that others may be helped, refreshed, and gladdened therewith, and, by the sweet taste thereof, led to wait for the opening of the same root and fountain of life in themselves, to yield living sap, and send forth living streams in them day by day.

TO THE
J E W S N A T U R A L,
AND TO THE
J E W S S P I R I T U A L,

Somewhat in the Love of GOD to the JEWS NATURAL, or
Seed of ABRAHAM after the Flesh.

OH! the glory of your state outward, who were the people whom God once chose and loved, and manifested his power and presence among, above all people! whose land was the glory of all lands, to which God brought you out of Egypt by an out-stretched arm, through a dreadful wilderness, wherein ye were tempted, tried, and exercised, and the succeeding generation fitted to enter into. Oh! what laws and statutes, and righteous judgments, did God give you, such as no nation besides had! What a temple had ye to appear before God in, and the ark of the covenant, and holy priests, kings and prophets! and how nigh was God to you, to be enquired of by you; and how ready to hear your prayers, in all that you called upon him for! The eternal God was thy refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms (the Lord was thy rock, and thou wast built upon him); and he did thrust out the enemy before thee, and did say, Destroy. And when the arm of the Lord did destroy them before thee, thou didst dwell in safety alone; and the Lord was a fountain of living waters to thee, and his heavens did drop down fatness upon thee. Happy wast thou, O Israel! who was like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord! the shield of thy help, and who was the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies were found liars unto thee, and thou didst tread upon their high places. And it might have been still so with thee, hadst thou not been unmindful of the rock that begat thee, and forgotten God that formed thee. For thy glory should not have been taken from thee, but swallowed up in a higher

higher glory, wherein thou mightest have had the first and chiefest share, hadst thou not, by thy almost constant rebellion and unbelief, provoked the Lord against thee; not only often to afflict, but at last utterly to cast thee off from being a people, and to chuse a people in thy stead, who should bring forth better fruits to the Lord of the vineyard, than thou in thy day hadst done.

Yet when thy state was thus glorious, it was not a state of the truly substantial, lasting glory, but a shadowy state or representative thereof. Thy day of glory was not the day of the Messiah, the day of everlasting light inwardly, wherein the Lord alone is exalted inwardly in the hearts of all, in whom he breaks down all that is contrary to the light of his day. Thy day was but the day of the outward shadows of the heavenly substance; but when that day (the day of the inward substance and glory) shined, thy shadows or shadowy state was to fly away, and to be swallowed up in the pure substance and spiritual kingdom of the Messiah.

Thy birth from Abraham after the flesh, was not the birth which was to inherit the promise in the kingdom of the Messiah; but there is a birth inwardly born of the Spirit, born after Abraham in his faith, who travels inwardly, as Abraham did outwardly, and seeks an inward country and city, whose builder and maker is God: to these the spiritual kingdom and promises belong.

Thy circumcision was but the circumcision outward, the circumcision of the flesh; it was not the circumcision of the heart: that is the circumcision of the inward Jew, which indeed the scripture called for from you, because there was somewhat near you, which would have so circumcised you, had ye hearkened and given up to it. But ye, as a people, were not so circumcised, but were a stiff-necked people (as Moses and the prophets were still complaining of you) uncircumcised in heart and ears, resisting God's Spirit both in your own hearts and in the prophets, until the Lord was provoked to take away both vision and prophet from you.

The Egypt in which your fathers were in bondage, and Pharaoh who oppressed them, was but the Egypt outward, and Pharaoh outward. There is an inward Egypt, wherein the spiritual seed, the inward man, the soul is in bondage; and there is a spiritual Pharaoh, that oppresseth the spiritual seed, in spiritual Egypt: and there is a stretching out the arm of the Almighty inwardly, to break the strength of the inward Pharaoh, to pierce Leviathan the crooked serpent, and to deliver the soul from under his captivity.

The wilderness also your fathers were led through, was but the outward wilderness, where they were tempted and tried by the Lord many ways, that he might do them good in the latter end. But the inward Israel, after they are led out of the inward Egypt, are tried in the inward wilderness; where they are judged after the flesh, and that wasted in them, which is not to enter into and inherit the good land, where they are tried in the furnace

of affliction, and their filth purged away by the spirit of judgment and burning; that the righteous nation, which hath received the holy inward law, and keeps the truth, may enter into the good land, city, and kingdom of the Messiah, and inherit the blessed promises of life and salvation there.

Moses, your great prophet, was a type of the great, lasting, standing prophet, whom God would raise up like unto Moses, who was to give his inward law as Moses did the outward, and to lead all the spiritual Israel as Moses did the outward Israel; and his word was to be heard and stand in all things whatsoever he shall say unto his people: and whosoever will not hear and obey this prophet, shall be cut off from among the holy, spiritual, and inwardly-living people.

Joshua who succeeded Moses, led but into the figurative rest: he was but a figure of him that inwardly leads into the inward and spiritual rest; which the true Jews, which are inwardly created and formed by God, and made a willing people, in the day of his power, enter into.

The pillar of cloud, and pillar of fire in the wilderness, were but figures of the spiritual pillar of cloud and fire, by which the spiritual Israel are led and defended in the glorious gospel-day of God's Spirit and power. Read *Isaiah*, ch. iv. which speaketh of the gospel-day, and the pillar and cloud of fire to be created therein, and of the defence which is to be on all the inward and spiritual glory.

The land of Canaan, the outward good and kingdom of Israel, was but a figure of the inward land, and kingdom of the inward Israel, in the days of the Messiah. This is the land of Judah in which the song is sung, because of the inward strong city where God appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks, which the righteous nation which keepeth the truth, enter into, *Isaiah* xxvi.

Their outward kings in that land, and particularly David, were but types of the spiritual king, the spiritual David, whom God will raise up to the spiritual people, who should seek the Lord their God, and David their king; who shall be their spiritual shepherd and ruler, whom God hath appointed to feed them in the integrity of his heart, and to guide them by the skilfulness of his hands, who is King of righteousness and peace inwardly, and who ministers righteousness and peace to the sheep and lambs of his pastures.

Their outward priests (even their high-priests) were but a representation of the great high-priest of God, who was to be a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck, *Psal.* cx.

Their outward covenant (made with them from the outward mount Sinai, upon the giving of the law, and holy statutes and ordinances, by which they were to live and enjoy God in their outward state) was but a shadow of the inward and spiritual covenant, the new and everlasting covenant, which God makes with his inward and spiritual people in the latter days.

Their

Their outward law, as written and engraven in tables of stone, was but a shadow of the inward law, which God puts into the children of the new covenant, inasmuch that they need not go outwardly to learn the knowledge of God, or his will or law; but the inward Israel find it inwardly written within. There the isles who wait for the law of the Spirit of life, for the law of the Messiah, receive the ministration of the law (in the Spirit and power of the Messiah) which they wait for.

Their outward mount Sion, on which the outward temple was built by Solomon, that wise king, that righteous king, that peaceable king, was a figure of the inward mountain, whereupon the inward house is built in the days of the gospel, in the days of the Messiah: and to this mountain are the spiritual people to come up and worship. And this is the Sion and Jerusalem (even inward and spiritual) from which the law and word of the Lord go forth in the days of the Messiah: and the spiritual house of Jacob combine or agree together to walk in the light of the Lord, who sends forth his light and truth, and leads them to his holy hill, and to his tabernacles.

Their outward tabernacle and temple, sanctified by God for him to dwell and appear in, was a shadow of God's inward dwelling-place in man; *I will tabernacle in them.* God dwelleth not in houses or temples made with hands; that is not the place of his rest, as saith the prophet Isaiah: but the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, whose throne is in heaven, and the earth his footstool, he dwelleth also with him that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the spirit of the contrite ones.

Their outward sabbaths were not the lasting sabbath or rest of the gospel, but given them for a sign; but the day of redemption from sin, the day of resting from sin, the day of ceasing from the works of the flesh, the day wherein God is all, and doth all by his Spirit and power inwardly, and wherein he alone is exalted: this is the day of rest which the Lord hath made for the spiritual Israel, and which they are glad of and rejoice in.

So their incense and sacrifices were not the lasting incense and sacrifices, but shadows thereof. The prayers of the saints, when God pours out the spirit of prayer and supplication upon them, and they pray to him therein, that is the incense. *Let my prayer be directed before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.* And this was the incense and pure offering, which in every place was to be offered up to God's name among the Gentiles, when his name should be great among them, as Malachi foretells. And what said David of old, when God's Spirit and the holy vision was upon him? *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in the midst of my bowels.* The sacrifices

of

of God are a broken spirit (*rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God*); a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. The offering praise to God from a sincere heart, and the ordering of the conversation aright, these are the sacrifices well-pleasing to God; for sacrifices were not the thing which God mainly required of outward Israel, but this, OBEY MY VOICE: and obedience is more acceptable than all other sacrifices, and to hearken than the fat of the choicest rams.

Besides, those outward sacrifices could not remove or take away sin from the conscience, but he that came to do the will, and to put an end to those sacrifices and oblations, which were but outward and imperfect; he doth both wash and take away sins from within, and also bring in everlasting righteousness, where his light shines, and his pure life springs inwardly in the heart.

And this is the substance of all the shadows, even the light eternal, the word eternal, the Son of the living God (who is Light as the Father is Light) the word nigh in the mouth and heart, the word of the new covenant; the which Moses directed your fathers to, *Deut. xxx.* and by which the Lord speaketh, and hath spoken throughout the world, *Psal. l. i.* and teacheth every man that hearkeneth to his voice, to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God, as it is expressed by the prophet Micah.

Now to you Jews, of the outward line of Abraham (whose return to the Lord my soul most earnestly desireth after, and for which I have most vehemently and wrestlingly prayed to the Lord) are some few weighty queries upon my heart:

Query 1. How came David to pant so after the living God, like the hart or hind after the water-brooks? Was it not from the quickening virtue of this inward word, which Moses the man of God had directed the mind to? Read *Psal. cxix.* and see how he breathed for quickenings from this word, on which all depends. And if ye come to experience this word, and the quickening virtue of it, and follow the Lord on therein, ye will soon come to know the day of the Messiah, and the glory of his kingdom, which is not outward, transitory, and of a perishing nature; but inward, spiritual, and everlasting (as David well knew, and spake sensibly of, *Psal. cxlv.* and elsewhere.)

Query 2. What are the waters which every thirsty soul is invited to? Are they not the waters of the Messiah? are they not waters that flow out of the wells of salvation? *Isaiah xii.* Do not the spiritual Israel draw spiritual water out of the wells of the Saviour in the days of the Messiah? What is it to come to these waters? Oh! that ye experimentally knew! But this I will tell you, from true and certain experience, that if ye come to take notice of this word of life, which God hath placed nigh in your mouths and hearts, to separate between the evil words and evil thoughts of the enemy's begetting and bringing forth, and the good words and good thoughts

thoughts of God's begetting and bringing forth, and incline your ear to it, and come from that which it reproves in you, and draws you from to itself; your souls shall soon come to live; and he that gives you life, will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David: but ye must still mind him as a witness, and leader, and commander, inwardly in your hearts, that ye may be preserved in the covenant, and enjoy the blessings of it; see *Isaiah* lv.

Query 3. Did not the Messiah come at the set time, at the time set by the Holy Spirit of prophecy? Did he not come in the prepared body to do the will? and did he not do the will? And after his obedience to his Father, was he not cut off, though not for himself? And after his cutting off, were not ye made desolate? why were ye made desolate? why did such a stroke come upon you as never before? Oh! consider it! Read *Dan.* ix. 24. to the end of the chapter, and let him that readeth understand.

Query 4. What was that curse, and on whom did it light? *Let their table become a snare to them, &c. Psal.* lxxix. Was it not on those that gave gall and vinegar to the Messiah to drink, whom David was a figure of, and spake in Spirit concerning? Whose eyes are always darkened? Doth not the veil lie still on your whole nation? Do ye know the inward mountain, where the veil or face of the covering is destroyed? in the inward day and light of the Messiah it is destroyed. There that which veils the noble eye of the mind is known, and also that which destroys and removeth it. To what purpose is it for you to read Moses and the prophets, when the veil is so upon you, that ye cannot see what is to be abolished, and is abolished by the dawning of the glorious day of the Messiah, and what is to remain and never to be abolished? There is a Jewship, there is a circumcision, there is a sabbath, there is a rest, &c. for the inward and spiritual people, which is to remain and never to be abolished.

Query 5. Who were those that God would hide his face from, and see what their end should be, because they were a froward generation, children in whom was no faith? Who were they that moved God to jealousy, and provoked him to anger? And what was the people and foolish nation he would provoke them to jealousy and anger with? *Deut.* xxxii. Was it not the spiritual, the holy nation inwardly, the true Jews, whom God took from among the Gentiles, whom he appeared among, and was a God and a Father to, when he cast off and forsook the Jews outward, and left them to be a desolation?

Query 6. Who are those that shall be hungry when God's servants shall eat? and thirsty, when God's servants shall drink? and ashamed, when his servants shall rejoice? Are not your souls hungry and parched for want of the spiritual sustenance, which the living God satisfieth his servants with, making a feast of fat things to them on his inward holy mountain? And are not ye ashamed of your expectations of the Messiah, while the servants of the Lord rejoice in him, their Prince and Saviour, and witness him daily a leader.

a leader and commander to them? What is the people whom the Lord hath slain and made desolate? (Are not ye a slain people to God, alienated from his life, Spirit, and power, dead in your literal notions and observations?) And what are the servants of the Lord, whom the Lord hath called by another name, even a name that ye never knew? see *Isaiab lxvi.* And consider, how all your day God spread out his hand to you, and ye were rebellious, and would not hear; and now night is come upon you, and your visitation, as such a people, is and hath been long ended.

Query 7. Did not God signify by the prophet Malachi, that he had no pleasure in you, nor would accept an offering at your hand? And did not he also signify the chusing of the Gentiles in your stead; that the called among the Gentiles should be his people; and his name which ye had prophaned, should be great among them, and their incense and pure offering in every place be accepted, even from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same? read *Mal. chap. i.*

Query 8. Now the inward people, and the inward covenant, the new covenant, are brought forth, shall ye ever be owned or regarded as an outward people, according to your outward covenant any more? Will not all such expectations fail you for ever? Ye have looked, from generation to generation, for the coming and appearing of the Messiah outwardly, after an outward manner: but his coming and appearance is inward; and he setteth up his kingdom, his everlasting kingdom in his saints, and in their hearts he ruleth inwardly; and the Messiah, the seed of the woman, bruise the head of the serpent there. Oh! that ye knew the substance! Oh! that ye knew the word of life in the heart, and were turned to it, and daily faithful and obedient! that ye might feel it crushing and dashing the power of sin and corruption in your hearts! This is the consolation, hope, and joy of the inward and spiritual Israel! Oh! that ye might be made partakers thereof; and that your long outward captivity and desolation might at length end in inward freedom and redemption! *Amen.*

Somewhat of Concern to the JEWS Spiritual, who are of the Seed of ABRAHAM spiritually, or according to the Faith, and gathered in this Day of GOD's Power, to the true and everlasting SHILOH.

THE scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be, *Gen. xlix. 10.*

Somewhat of Concern to the Jews spiritual. 281

Old Jacob, in the spirit of prophecy, saw that Judah was to have the scepter, the kingly power; and it was not to depart from him, it was to be his right; and the lawgiver was to be between his feet, till Shiloh came; then the right was Shiloh's to reign, and to give laws to his people, whom he should gather out of the kingdom of darkness, and from Satan's power, into his own inward, spiritual, and everlasting kingdom. This was the true king, God's king, whom he would set upon the holy hill of spiritual Sion; and all the holy, inward, spiritual gatherings of all people, scattered from the holy, living power, must be to him.

I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him. And his dominion shall not pass away, or the scepter and lawgiving power shall not pass away from him; as it did from Judah, nor shall his kingdom ever be destroyed, *Dan. vii. 14.* but God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Query. *But who are the people that shall be gathered to him?*

Ans. The people that shall hear his voice, and come at his call, that shall receive the instruction of wisdom, and feel the drawing power and virtue of the Father, in the day of his power. It is written in the prophets, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* And every one that is taught and learneth of the Father, cometh to the Son, cometh to the Messiah, cometh to the Shiloh, to the Word eternal, to the Word of life in the heart.

Query. *Was not the Messiah promised to the Jews, to come of them, and to be appropriated to them?*

Ans. He was promised to them, and to come of them; but not to be appropriated to them: but he was to be the universal Saviour to all that should come under his ensign and banner. *He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and he shall sprinkle many nations, &c.* And God promised that he would give his Son (his elect choice servant) for a light to the Gentiles.

Query. *Were the Jews then excluded?*

Ans. No; they were to be gathered to Shiloh, as well as others. Nay, the Lord had a special regard to them; the gospel was first preached to them; they had the first offer, or the first call to the spiritual glory; they were the children of the prophets, and of the covenant of God made with their Fathers; unto whom God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless them, in turning away every one of them from their iniquities. And the whole nation, turning from their iniquities, should have been gathered by him, and should have enjoyed the blessing of his day and kingdom. Yea, the first gathering was from among them, and the first glorious gospel church was at Jerusalem, where the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus did most eminently and wonderfully break forth, and great grace was upon them all. But the nation was not gathered to Shiloh, nor did come under his scepter and government; but only a remnant of the nation. So these be-

282 *Somewhat of Concern to the Jews spiritual.*

ing gathered, the rest were cast off; and the ensign was carried among the Gentiles, and the great gathering was there among them.

Query. How is it manifest that the great gathering to Shiloh was to be from among the Gentiles?

Ans. By many express prophecies of Scripture, and promises to the Messiah, that he should have the Gentiles for his inheritance and possession. When God established his king, the Messiah, upon the holy hill of spiritual Sion, notwithstanding all the heathen's rage against him, and the people of the Jews imagining a vain thing (thinking to keep the body of him in the grave, who was the resurrection and the life) what faith the Lord to him? *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession, Ps. ii.* The Lord said, in another place, *It is a light thing that thou mayest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth, Isai. xlix. 6.* Again the Lord saith further, *From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts, Mal. i. 11.* Sing, O barren! thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord, Isai. liv. 1. Who was the married wife? Who was the mother in the days of the first covenant? Was it not the Jerusalem below, who was then desolate and barren? Was it not another Jerusalem, which is free, and the mother of all the spiritual children? Why was she now to rejoice and sing? But because she was to break forth on the right hand and on the left, and her seed was to inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited, *ver. 3.* The covenant of Mount Sinai did bring forth a great people, whereof Jerusalem, that was below, was the mother. The covenant afterwards made, besides that in Horeb, whereof the Word nigh in the heart and mouth is the foundation (by which Word God circumciseth) was as yet barren, and did not bring forth a people to the Lord. But this covenant was to have a time; the Jerusalem above was to have a time, wherein her seed should inherit the Gentiles; and the Maker, the Husband, should be called the God of the whole earth, *ver. 5.* Read *Gal. iv.* and see how the apostle of the Gentiles expounds the mystery, shewing which is the free woman, and her free children, and which is the bond woman, and which the bond children, who are cast out in the day of God, and in the shining of his heavenly light inwardly, and cannot inherit the glorious kingdom of the gospel, with the children of the free woman. And consider who were the people in the time of the first covenant? Who obtained mercy then? Were they not the Jews? And who were not a people, and who did not obtain mercy, but were left out of the love and mercy of the first covenant?

Were

Were they not the Gentiles? And did not the Lord promise that he would have mercy on them that had not obtained mercy? And that he would say to them that were not his people, *THOU ART MY PEOPLE*; and they shall say, *My God*, *Hof. ii. 23.* compared with *Rom. ix. 26.* Was not this once gloriously fulfilled in the first visitation of the Gentiles? And is it not again gloriously fulfilled in his now visiting them again with the fresh sound of the everlasting gospel, as was promised, *Rev. xiv. 7.*

Oh! what a promise is that concerning the day of God! that *in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious*, *Isai. xi. 10.* Is not *this* the day wherein the holy mountain is known, and that nothing can hurt or destroy there? And doth not the knowledge of the Lord cover his land, his earth, as the waters do the sea? And doth not the root of Jesse, the rock of life and salvation, stand for an ensign, placed so by God; and who can displace it, or shake them that are built on the inward Mount Sion? Yea, is not the rest of the weary soul, when he comes hither, found to be very glorious? And when this ensign is more fully lifted up, shall not the Gentiles more abundantly come unto God from the ends of the earth, and bewail their dead and estranged estate from God? (saying, *Surely our fathers inherited vanity, and things wherein is no profit*, *Jer. xvi. 19.*) And shall they not turn from all their idols to serve the living God? *Thess. i. 9.* And concerning the Messiah it was promised, that in his name should the Gentiles trust, and the isles should wait for his law, and he should bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, *Isai. xli. 11.* with *Matt. xii. 21.*

But what should I mention any more scriptures unto you concerning this thing, when-as ye have so large, full, certain, and daily experience of it in that which is pure and living of God, which never deceived nor can deceive any; for ye are begotten by his Spirit into his own image and nature, and have received the Spirit of adoption, wherein ye cry *Abba Father* to the Father of spirits. He found you indeed in a strange land, under great captivity, and alienation from him. Ye have been in Egypt, in Sodom, in Babylon spiritually; but the mercy of the Lord hath followed you thither, and the arm of the Lord hath reached to you there, and hath cut Rahab, and wounded the Dragon: yea, he whom the Lord hath given for a light to the Gentiles, hath shined to you there, in the midst of your darkness. So that God sent among you the prophet like unto Moses (tho' far above Moses) and hearing him, he led you out of Egypt, and by the rod of his power did signs, and wonders, and valiant acts there, breaking that power which with a strong hand held you captive there, and oppressed you. And you have known the travel, trials, and temptations in the spiritual wilderness, and the falling of the carcases which were to fall there, and the holy leading by the pillar of cloud and fire through all the entanglements and dangers therein. Yea, and the faithful among you, the tried and prepared among you, have passed over Jordan (the river of pure judgment)

284 *Somewhat of Concern to the Jews spiritual.*

judgment) into the good land, and come to witness David and Solomon (who are one in Spirit) your king, who rules in righteousness, and ministers to you peace everlasting. And ye have an high-priest there, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedeck, who is made the everlasting high-priest of God; not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life; whose lips preserve the knowledge of the law for you, in that endless power of life; who ministers for you, and to you, in the endless power, and intercedes with power and efficacy, and sprinkles the blood of the covenant upon you, which takes away sin from your hearts and consciences. So that ye know the inward Jew's state, the inward Holy Land and kingdom, the inward circumcision, before ye enter into that land; and the inward Lamb, the inward passover, the inward Mount Sion, and Jerusalem; the inward sacrifices and incense, the inward tabernacle, temple, and ark of the covenant, the inward shew-bread, the inward manna, the inward rod that buddeth, the inward candlestick and the lamps, which are never to go out in God's temple. And what should I say more? All that that people were to be outwardly, in an outward way and state, hath God made inwardly in the substance; and what God would have been to them outwardly, had they obeyed his voice, and kept his statutes and judgments, that he is to you inwardly, who are the called and chosen, and faithful followers of the Lamb; and ye are the enjoyers of their blessings and promises inwardly. Oh! the glory of your state to the eye that is opened to see it!

Now somewhat doth remain on my heart unto you.

Oh! be daily sensible of the tender goodness and mercy of the Lord, which is broke forth among you! What mercy, what love hath the Father shewn unto you, that ye should be thus accounted the children of God! That they which were once nigh, should be removed so far off; and ye which were so far off, should be brought so nigh, and should for ever inherit the sure mercies of David! For of a truth the Lord will never forsake you; but his mercy endures for ever towards you, and your stakes shall never be removed; but this inward building shall stand for ever. This Sion is the place of God's rest, where he will dwell for ever; whereof the outward Sion was but a figure.

Secondly, Remember what the Lord promised himself concerning you. When he was weary of that people, and continually complaining of them, oh! what did he promise himself concerning the people he would bring forth by the Spirit and power of the Messiah in the latter days! Did he not promise himself that they should be an holy people, an inwardly circumcised people, a people that should please him; sheep that should hear the shepherd's voice, and be healed by him, gathered home to him, and so follow and learn of him the shepherd; that they should all know him from the least to the greatest; and that he would forgive their sins, and heal their backslidings, and they should not return to folly, or backslide
any

Somewhat of Concern to the Jews spiritual. 285

any more, as the children after the flesh always did? Is not this the people whom indeed God hath formed for himself, who shall shew forth his praise.

Thirdly, Remember what a covenant God hath prepared to make with you, as ye incline your ears to him, and are led by him into the holy agreement with him; even a covenant which is not weak, as the old covenant was; but is full of virtue and vigour, to enable you to do whatever God requires of you. Mark what it contains, putting God's fear into you: not the fear which is taught by man's precepts, which man may get into his carnal mind; but which God places as the treasury of life in the heart; as it is written, *The fear of the Lord and his treasure*, Isai. xxxvi. 6. And oh! who knows the preciousness of his treasure! How it cleanseth the heart, and keepeth it clean, and will not suffer the mind that is seasoned with it, and kept to it, to depart from the living God! It fenceth from unbelief, it fenceth from disobedience; it will not suffer the soul so much as to meddle with any appearance of evil. Oh! precious, glorious, blessed treasure! happy is the man that feareth always with this fear! Another precious thing this covenant contains, is the law written in the heart, that it shall be as near, yea, nearer than sin is, in the heart that is made tender, and hath the law of the Spirit of life written in it. Who knows what it is to have the law of love, the law of life, the law of the Spirit, the law of faith, the law of new obedience, livingly written by God in his heart! Surely none can but they in whom God writes it! And such cannot but desire to have it written in their hearts by his blessed finger daily more and more. But this covenant contains yet more, even the putting of his own Spirit within them, to be a fountain of life there, a fountain of strength and wisdom there, to make them more and more willing in the day of his power, and to cause them to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and judgments, and do them, that the Lord their God may bless them, and delight in them.

Oh! who would not long after, and take up the cross and shame, to enjoy the glory of this state! Oh! what hath God done for a poor despised remnant among the Gentiles! Oh! who would not desire to keep this blessed covenant with the Lord, that he might fully enjoy the Lord, that the marriage with the Maker might be witnessed in his loving-kindness and everlasting righteousness, and all unrighteousness and uncleanness might be put away, removed, and separated from the heart for ever. Ah! the virgin spirit which the Lamb loves, and delights to marry with! *He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit*, and he must part with all that is old, evil, unclean, and corrupt in him, that would be joined to the Lord, and become one Spirit with him. Oh! who would lose the precious fear of the covenant, which is clean, and endureth for ever, and keepeth clean and chaste to the Lord for ever! And who would miss of one law which God hath to write in the hearts of his children, when every law is a law of life,

286 *Somewhat of Concern to the Jews spiritual.*

life, and changeth the mind into the nature of the law-giver! And who would grieve God's Spirit, which is our Comforter? Or quench that which kindles the pure flame of love and life in our hearts? Much less can any of his dear and tender children be willing to vex him, by manifest carelessness and disobedience, who giveth us to drink of the river of his pleasure!

Oh! my dear friends, ye do not know the great travail of my heart, that all the children of the Lord might walk before him in all well-pleasing, that we might come all into covenant, into the full covenant, and walk fully with him in the covenant, that his anger might be for ever turned away from us all, and he might never be wroth with, nor rebuke any of us any more. It is written on my heart the breaking forth of this glory would reach the Jews: and though they be cast off as to their outward state, and not so to be owned, or come into that glory any more; yet there is a day of mercy and love for them, as to that inward state of life and redemption, which their outward state typified: and the breaking forth of the full glory of the Gentiles, and the manifestation of God's mighty power and presence with them (they being made by God a people to him, and so walking with God, as none possibly can but those who are created anew, and so made by him), this might provoke the Jews (the poor, scattered, forsaken Jews) to seek after the Lord their God, and David their king, inwardly to be revealed in them, and rule among them.

The Lord God of our life and tender mercies, carry on to perfection this blessed work of his, which he hath so mightily begun, and so mightily hitherto carried on; and keep us in the sense of his good Spirit, and in tender and holy subjection thereto, and in unity together in the life, wherein we have been gathered and preserved, and in pure judgment over all the workings of the enemy every-where, and in the gospel love one to another, and to all men, even our greatest enemies, that we may seek the good of all men, even the rescuing and preserving all out of sin and wrath, as much as in us is possible; that the pure light wherewith our God and heavenly Father hath enlightened us, may shine in us; and the life wherewith he hath quickened us, may live in us, and we may feed on nothing but life, and grow in nothing but life and truth, to the great glory of our heavenly Father, and to the great joy of our hearts. *Amen.*

A few Words to ENGLAND, my Native Country.

Oh! Land of my Nativity! Oh! my dear Countrymen!

THE pure power of the Lord is upon me, and the springs of life open in me; and among many other things, I am melted in love and desires after your welfare. And this is in my heart to say to you: if I now testify to you in truth of a pearl, a heavenly pearl, an everlasting pearl, will ye not hear me? If I tell you your heart is the field, or earth, wherein it is hid, will ye not consider of it? If the everlasting gospel be preached again, which contains true tidings of redemption from sin, will ye not listen after it? If the kingdom of God, and righteousness of Christ, be to be revealed within, would ye not willingly learn to wait for it there, and beg of God that the eye may be opened in you, which alone can see it when it doth appear. Indeed God's visitation is upon this nation in an especial manner; his light and power is breaking forth in it, against the darkness and power of the spirit of Satan, which hath captivated and still captivateth many. Ye desire outward liberty, and the enjoyment of your outward rights; would ye not be free inwardly? Free from the base, earthly, selfish nature and spirit, which man, fallen from God, and the glory wherein he created him, is degenerated into? Oh! is not the power of God, and life of Christ, able to restore man to this? He that created man at first so glorious in his own image, is he not able to create him anew? Oh! hear, my dear countrymen! the power is revealed which createth anew; and they that receive it, and are as clay in the hands of the great potter, given up to be formed by it, are daily created (by the operation of it) anew, into an holy, heavenly, innocent, living, tender, righteous frame day by day; and are made willing, daily more and more, to be the Lord's, in this day of his power; and do receive power to become sons, and strength against their soul's enemies: and the glorious work of redemption which God hath begun in them, the arm of his strength mightily carrieth on in them, to their comfort and his everlasting praise.

There is a spiritual Egypt and Sodom, as well as there was an outward; and there is a spiritual wilderness, and Canaan also; and the arm of God's power inwardly and spiritually hath been revealed in this spiritual Egypt, wilderness, and Canaan, as really as ever it was in the outward. Do ye not read of a Jew inward, and a circumcision inward, and the leaven inward, and keeping the feast of unleavened-bread, even of bread that is not leavened with sin? And he that eats of the unleavened bread, it unleavens him of sin, and leavens him with life and holiness: for it is an holy bread, and

and a living bread. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, which they that feed upon live, and they that live feed upon. And though they be many, yet feeding upon this bread, they become one bread, one living body, consisting of a living head, and living members; for the same life and pure heavenly nature which is in the head, is communicated by him to the members.

But how shall we find this? may some say.

I will tell you how we found it, and how none can miss of it, that sweep the house, and make a diligent and faithful search after it. That in the heart of man which turns against sin, discovers sin, draws from sin, wherein God ministers help against sin, that is it. That is the pearl hid; that is the kingdom hid; in that is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, in all that receive and give up to this holy heaven. This is of the nature of God and Christ; this is a measure of his light, of his pure life; this is the law and commandment everlasting, which God writes in the hearts of his spiritual Israel. For the inward Jew hath inward tables, where the inward law is written, for the inward eye to read. Oh! how high is God inwardly, to the inward people, in this our day! Oh! the pure glory is broke forth! But alas! men are in their several sorts of dreams, and take no notice of it. What shall the Lord do to awaken this nation? In what way shall his power appear, to bring down unrighteousness, and to bring up righteousness, in the spirits of people? Do ye not think the Lord hath been at work? How could deceit be so wasted inwardly, and truth so grown inwardly, and overspread more and more, and gain ground in the nation, if the hand and power of the Lord were not with it, blessing it. Oh! take notice of the handy-work of the Lord, ye children of men, and wait to feel truth hear, and to partake of the living virtue and power of it, that ye may feel your hearts creating anew, and the old heavens and earth may inwardly pass away, wherein dwells unrighteousness; and the new heavens and the new earth may be inwardly witnessed, wherein dwells righteousness. Oh! that this nation might become a paradise of God! Oh! that every one might be sensible of his presence, and power, and kingdom, and righteous government inwardly in the heart, from the king that sits on the throne, to the beggar on the dunghill! Surely man was not made for himself! Surely he was not made such a creature as now he is! but in the holy image of God, with love in his heart to God above all, and to his neighbour as to himself. Oh! what are the religions and professions of several sorts where this love is not found! The Lord is restoring his image, and bringing forth the true pure religion again. The pearl, the truth, contains and comprehends it. Oh! buy the pearl! oh! buy the precious truth! sell all that is contrary to it for it; take up the cross to all that is evil in thee, as the light in thee maketh it manifest, and thou shalt have the free possession of it in thy heart, and feel it a root of life, a treasure of life, a well of life, out of which the living water will be daily springing up in thee unto life everlasting. *Amen.*

The 22d of the 7th month, 1676.

T H R E

THREE QUERIES

UPON

THREE VERSES of the XLVth PSALM.

Verse 4. **T**HERE is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

Query 1. Which is the river, and what are the streams thereof, which make glad the city of God? And which is the city of God which they make glad? which are the tabernacles of the Most High? and which is the holy place of those tabernacles? Oh! my dear countrymen, that every one in this nation did understand and enjoy these things! For the Lord is ready to beget a will, to beget a thirst in the hearts of the children of men; and whosoever thirsteth, whosoever will, is called to the waters, and may come to the waters, and take of the water of life freely (*Isai. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17.*) yea, to the full satisfaction of their souls. For indeed this is the day of God's power, wherein he doth make his people willing to come to him, and to abide with him in the fountain of living waters; and those that do come to him, and abide with him, he abundantly satisfieth with the fatness of his house, and giveth them to drink of the river of his pleasures, *Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9.* Mark, God is the fountain of living waters, with him is the fountain of life, a river of pleasures, a river whose streams make glad the whole city, even the holy place of all the tabernacles of the Most High; and he giveth his citizens to drink of it; and whosoever drinketh of it, it maketh them glad, it refresheth their life. Oh! that more knew what this means!

Verse 5. *God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early; or when the morning appeareth, or from the morning appearing.*

Query 2. How is God in the midst of this city? Is it not more gloriously in an inward way, than ever he was in the temple in the outward Jerusalem, in an outward way? How is she built? How is she founded and situated? How comes it about that she shall not be moved? How is God her refuge and strength, and present help in the time of trouble? After what manner doth God arise inwardly, and scatter his enemies? How doth the morning-light help her? After what manner, when the enemy cometh in like a flood, doth the Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against him? Ah! blessed are they that know and experience, and live in the enjoyment

290 *Concerning the true Church and Ministry, &c.*

of these things! Oh! that this whole nation did so! Were it not worth the suffering of much, the denying of much, and the bearing of much judgment, to come to this?

Verse 10. *Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among (or in) the heathen: I will be exalted in the earth.*

Query 3. What is that stillness wherein God is known to be God, not outwardly in notion, but inwardly in the heart? Where is that silence of mind, wherein God teacheth his Israel in the new covenant, to know him as he is; even all of them, from the greatest to the least? How will God come to be exalted in the heathen, and in the earth? Is it not by the light of his day, breaking forth and shining in them? Where this day breaks forth in any heart, doth it not break down and destroy the kingdom of darkness inwardly? And doth not the King of Glory consume the man of sin, the wicked one that was exalted in the temple before (which temple belonged of right to God) with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming or appearing? *Isaiab xi. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 8.* Then is the day known wherein the Lord alone is exalted. Oh! that this day were more known; and the Lord, who is indeed worthy, were more exalted, and all flesh become his footstool for ever!

Concerning the true Church and Ministry under the Gospel, and the Maintenance thereof; some few Questions answered in Truth and Plainness of Heart, and left to the Witness and Testimony of GOD in other Mens Consciences.

Quest. 1. **W**HICH is the true church, or the gospel-church, or the church according to the new covenant? For there was an old covenant, and a church according to that, under the law: and there is a new covenant, and a church according to that, under the gospel.

Ans. For the clearing of this to the hearts and consciences of people, let us enquire and consider what the new covenant is, and then it will more easily appear which is the church according to the new covenant.

The new covenant, according to plain scripture, and according to manifest experience in this blessed day of the shining of the gospel-light in mens hearts, is a covenant of God's putting his law in the inward parts of people, and writing it in their hearts, and of his becoming their God and making them his people, and of teaching them all to know him (inwardly and experimentally) from the least to the greatest, and of being merciful to their

un-

Concerning the true Church and Ministry, &c. 291

unrighteousness, and remembering their sins and iniquities no more, *Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.*

Now if this be the new covenant, the covenant of the gospel-church, then they are the gospel-church who are the people of God according to this covenant, who have the law put by God into their inward parts, and writ in their hearts; and so according to this law and covenant, have God to be their God, and are his people, and are taught by him to know him (as it is written, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, Isaiah liv. 13. and John vi. 45.*) and whose unrighteousness God hath been merciful to, and whose sins and iniquities he remembereth no more, being washed away from their consciences by the blood of the everlasting covenant, which the blood of bulls and goats could never do: so that this is the New Testament-church (or gospel-church); a church of Jews inward, as the law-church was a church of Jews outward: a church of inward worshippers, of worshippers in Spirit and in truth, *John iv. 23.* as the law-church was a church of worshippers outward: a church of inwardly circumcised ones, as the law-church was a church of outwardly circumcised ones, *Rom. ii. 29.* A church of such as are inwardly holy, as the law-church was to be a church of such as were outwardly holy: a church of such as offer inward incense and sacrifices, as the law-church was a church of such as offered outward incense and sacrifices: a church of inwardly-redeemed ones, from the inward Egypt, from the inward darkness and power of Satan, as the law-church was a church of such as were redeemed from the outward Egypt, and the power of Pharaoh outward: a church that hath the inward ark (*Rev. xi. 19.*) the inward presence, the inward manna, &c. as the outward church of the Jews had the outward.

Quest. 2. *Which is the true gospel ministry, and who are the true gospel ministers?*

Ans. Those whom Christ sends forth, in the Spirit and power of his Father, to gather and build up this church. Christ had all power in heaven and earth given him, even to this very end, to gather, defend, and build up his church: and he bid his apostles wait for the same power; and sends forth his ministers in the same power, that they may be able ministers of the gospel, which is not words but power, even the power of God unto salvation, *Rom. i. 16.* The new covenant stands not in the letter, but in Spirit and power; and they that are the ministers of it, must receive life, Spirit, and power from Christ (the head) and minister in that Spirit, life, and power to the members, or they cannot nourish and build them up; yea, they must preach and minister to the world in it, or they are not able to gather out of the world into it. Christ, the Lord of his church, the foundation of life in his church, the everlasting rock, is a living stone; and his church is built of lively stones: and how can any minister life unto them, or build them up in the life, Spirit, and power, but who are in the life, Spirit and power, and who receive life, Spirit, and power from the head, to

292 *Concerning the true Church and Ministry, &c.*

further, quicken, and build up the living members with? The milk which nourisheth the living babe, is living, which must come pure from the breast of life, and not be mixed with man's wisdom or brain inventions, or it cannot yield pure nourishment. What then must the bread, and wine, and water of the kingdom be, whereon the children and heirs of the kingdom must feed, or they cannot be satisfied? And the ministers of the gospel are stewards of this heavenly life, this heavenly Spirit, this heavenly power, this heavenly treasure which they have in the earthen vessels, and which God enables them to bring forth, for the feeding of his lambs and sheep. Christ said unto Peter, *Lovest thou me more than these?* Peter answered him, *Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.* If it be so, *feed my lambs, feed my sheep*, said Christ to him. But how should he feed them? In what should he feed them? With what should he feed them? All power, saith Christ, is given me in heaven and in earth; and I am to ascend to my Father, and to receive the fullness of his Spirit; and do ye wait, and ye shall receive abundantly of the same Spirit and power, and then in that Spirit and power ye shall be able to feed my lambs and sheep, that are begotten and gathered to me, in it; but out of it none is able to feed and build them up; for that is the very thing they are to be fed with and built up in. Indeed a man may be a minister of the letter, a minister of the law, without the Spirit and power; but of the gospel he cannot possibly; for that consists not in letter, but in Spirit, 2 *Cor.* iii. and the faith that is to be begotten there, is not to stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. The gospel-state, the gospel-church, the gospel-building, begins in the power, and is carried on in the power, and finished or perfected in the power; and the whole ministry of the gospel is to partake of this power, and minister in it, or they can do nothing in this work. Christ Jesus our Lord begun it in this power, and none can carry it on without this power: the Lord God of Glory laid the foundation; *Behold, I lay in Sion for a foundation*, &c. *Isai.* xxviii. 16. 1 *Pet.* ii. 4, 5, 6. And the quickening Spirit alone is able to make living stones and spiritual stones; and the Lord alone is able to build them up by the operation of this Spirit and power; and they that are the true ministers of the gospel, minister in this, and are to wait for it daily from God that they may minister in it.

Quest. 3. *What is the maintenance of the ministers of Christ, or what is to be the maintenance of the true ministers under the gospel?*

Ans. Christ, who hath sent them forth to minister in his name, hath provided for them; and they that are his true ministers, are satisfied with what he hath provided for them, *Matt.* x. 10. being careful not to make the gospel, which is to be an inward blessing, outwardly chargeable to any. The mind of the true ministers is about the service of Christ; how they may be faithful to him, gather souls to him, feed them with the bread of life from him; not what they shall have from men for so doing, for such covet no man's gold or silver, &c.

Some

Some QUESTIONS answered concerning the LAMB'S WAR.

Quest. 1. **W**HO is the Lamb?

Answ. He that takes away the sins of the world. The word which was in the beginning. *Behold the lamb of God*, said John, *John* i. 1. and ver. 29. He that was born of the virgin Mary after the flesh; and was also the man-child, born of the travailing-church after the Spirit, *Rev.* xii. 5.

Quest. 2. *Who makes war with the Lamb?*

Answ. All that are in wickedness, in darkness, in sin and corruption, and under the power thereof, who strive to defend and maintain this kingdom against the appearance of his light, Spirit, and power in them.

Quest. 3. *What strength have they on their side that make war against the Lamb?*

Answ. The strength of the great red dragon, who hath seven heads and ten horns; and in every one of his heads is wisdom, and in every one of his horns there is power. So that dreadful is the battle that is fought between them, either inwardly in the heart, or outwardly in the world, when Christ appears in his light, Spirit and power, to assault and break down the kingdom of darkness, and to set up his own kingdom, which must be set up, even in the world, *Dan.* vii. 14. 27. *Rev.* xi. 15.

Quest. 4. *Did the great red dragon and his army ever (in any respect) prevail in this battle?*

Answ. Yes; for even while the Lamb, and his pure life and holy testimony have prevailed, so that the dragon and his army could get no ground over them inwardly, but salvation (the wall and bulwark of God's heritage) and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ, did prevail inwardly; yet the dragon, even then, hath prevailed over their goods, liberties, and lives outwardly; and he drove the woman, the true church, out of her place, as I may say, that she was forced to fly into the wilderness, he so sorely assaulted her: yea, after that also he made war with the remnant of her seed, and cast some of them into prison, and drank the blood of those that would not drink his false church's cup, but keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus, *Rev.* xii. and *chap.* ii. 10. Yea, the beast to which he gave his power (which had seven heads and ten horns like him, *chap.* xiii. 1.) made war with the saints, and overcame them outwardly, though he could not overcome them inwardly; for he could not make them to worship him, *ver.* 7, 8. Nay, nor the second beast neither, though he had horns like a lamb, and spake like a dragon, and exercised all the power of the first beast, and did great wonders, and had

had power to give life unto the image of the former beast, and would kill all that would not worship the image of it; and would suffer none to buy or sell but such as had the mark or name of the beast: yet neither could this beast overcome the followers of the Lamb, as to their inward life and testimony, though it had power to kill and suppress them outwardly, *ver.* 11. to the end, and *chap.* xiv. 9. to *ver.* 13. which plainly shews the saints had patience, and kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, and would not worship the beast and his image, nor receive his mark, either in forehead or hand.

Quest. 5. What was the cry up and down nations, when the dragon and the beast thus prevailed, and when the false church carried her cup of fornications up and down through kingdoms and nations, and made the kings and inhabitants of the earth drink thereof; and who would not drink thereof, she would not let them buy nor sell, but impoverish, imprison them, and drink their blood? Rev. xvii. 2. and 6.

Answ. The cry every-where was, *Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with the beast?* Indeed there appeared no power any-where able to withstand or resist this power, which the dragon had, who gave it both to the beast which arose out of the sea, and to the beast which arose out of the earth; both which joined together to persecute all that would not drink of the false church's cup, which was golden without, but full of abomination and filthiness of fornication, fornicating from the holy life, Spirit, and power of the Lamb inwardly, who is the head of the true church and true worshippers, *Rev. xiii. 4. and chap. xvii. 4, 5.*

Quest. 6. What is the time of the dragon's, the beast's, and false church's thus prevailing against the true church, in reference to the outward, though they cannot prevail against its inward life and testimony; but that (through patience and sufferings) prevails over and reigns inwardly, in the midst of all their cruelty and oppressing of the outward man?

Answ. It is the time of Antichrist's reign, and sitting in the temple as if he were God, and exalting himself over all that is called God, and which ought to be worshipped. It is the time of the true church's being in the wilderness, and of the man-child's (which the true church brought forth) being caught up to God; which things were to last, according to the scripture account, one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or a time, times, and half a time, *2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. Rev. xii. 6, 14.*

Quest. 7. What will the Lamb do when this time is out?

Answ. He will come and make war again; he will come with his heavenly armies, armed with spiritual armour, and fight an heavenly battle; yea, he will judge and make war in righteousness, against the unrighteousness of the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet; and his heavenly armies shall follow him their captain and leader, on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, who shall fight in his Spirit and power, against all that he fighteth against; and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that
with

with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and make the spirits of all his opposers bow under him, and fly to shelter themselves from that wrath which they cannot escape. Oh! who would not kiss the Son, that he might not provoke the Lamb to wrath against him, whose wrath is dreadful! *Rev. xix. 11. to the end. Psal. ii. 11.*

Quest. 8. What shall the cry be, when God's Spirit and power prevaileth over the dragon's spirit and power, when the Lamb gets the victory, when he smites the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall slay the wicked; when he brings down the dragon, beast, and false prophet, and the false church, mother of harlots (which hath drunk the blood of saints) with his vials, plagues, woes, thunders, &c.? when Babylon the great city falls, which made all nations drunk with her spiritual wine of fornication?

Ans. Then the power which doth this shall be magnified. Then it shall be said no more, who can make war with the beast? but who can withstand this power? Who can make war with the innocent, righteous Lamb (who hath his sword in his mouth) and with his tender-hearted, faithful followers, and prosper? Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints, Rev. xv. 3, 4. Yea, a great voice of much people in heaven shall say, Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his saints at her hand, chap. xix. ver. 1, 2.

Now doth it not concern all people to consider which is Sion, God's holy mountain, and which is the Jerusalem of his building; and the holy city of God, the holy church of God, the mother of all the truly living children? for the Jerusalem which is above, and which is free, is the mother of them all, *Gal. iv. 26.* And also which is Babylon, the city built by man, and the spirit of Antichrist, in a kind of likeness, but not in the real nature of the true church; that they may wait for and follow God's call to come out of her, and may not partake of her sins, of her sorceries (*Rev. xviii. 22.*) of her fornication from the pure life, Spirit and power, and setting up worships, and compelling people to worship in her forms (which are out of the life, and out of the power) that they partake not of her plagues, which will indeed be very dreadful, such as shall affright any from coming near her, or meddling with her spiritual sorceries and fornications any more, *Rev. xviii. 4. and ver. 9, 10.* Oh! therefore let every one consider what the beast is, what his image, what the mark in the forehead, what in the right hand; and take heed he be not found worshipping the beast and his image, or receiving his mark, either in his forehead or right hand, lest God make him to drink of the wine of his wrath, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he be tormented with fire and brimstone in the

the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, and have no rest day nor night, *Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.* I had rather run great hazards outwardly, and suffer much affliction and persecution from men, to keep my soul true to God, in the spiritual worship and testimony which he hath given me, against all false ways and invented worships, than expose my soul to the hazard of drinking of this dreadful cup of God's indignation; which the Lord God of tender mercies teach men, and give them true wisdom, to avoid and escape. *Amen.*

The C O N C L U S I O N.

BEHOLD my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men); so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider, *Isai. lii. 13, 14, 15.*

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies, whereby the people shall fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness; and hatest wickedness, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows, *Psal. xlv. ver. 2. to 8.*

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way; and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, *Isai. xxxv. ver. 3. to the end.*

Blessed

Blessed be the Lord God of life for ever! these scriptures, and many more, are sweetly and preciouslly fulfilled in the hearts of a remnant, in this our day. They were once (in a degree) fulfilled in the day of the appearance of the word of life, in the prepared body of flesh. They were again more generally fulfilled, in the day of the pouring out of his Spirit, and gathering a people to him, both from among the Jews and Gentiles, whom he did sprinkle with his holy life, Spirit, and power. And they are again fulfilled in the hearts of many, after the long night of darkness, and great and large apostasy from the Spirit and power of the apostles. Blessed, Oh! blessed be the Lord, the Sun of righteousness hath again shone forth, and appeared inwardly in a glorious, living, powerful manner, to them that have feared his name; and he hath been a God of vengeance to the man of sin; yea, to all that was dark, fleshly, and corrupt in them; and a God of mercy and tender bowels to those which panted after, and waited for his salvation. And the healing virtue from under the wings of the Saviour, and the holy anointing, hath dropped upon the eyes of the blind, the pure eye-salve, and they have been opened; and the ears of the deaf, by the voice of the Son of God, have been unstopped; and the inwardly and spiritually lame have leaped as an hart; and the tongue, which could not name God in truth and righteousness, but hath been dumb before him, and before men also, could not but sing, because of the breaking forth of the waters and streams of life, upon the thirsty land and parched ground, making them a pool and springs of water; which land, which thus is changed from its wilderness and parched state, into an holy, fresh, and living state, the dragons do not lodge in; nor is it any more an habitation or cage for unclean and noisome birds (as great professing Babylon, the mother of harlots, with all her fleshly-professing daughters, is) but life dwells there: the Holy One is in the midst of this land, and it brings forth the fruits of life and righteousness, to the Righteous and Holy One. And here the King of Glory's highway, even the way of holiness, is known, which none but those whom he makes holy can walk in. Let men profess what they will, yet being unclean in heart and conversation, they cannot pass over to come into this way; but the holy, they which are made holy by God, and keep to, live in, and follow that which is holy, though wayfaring men, and though otherwise fools, yet they shall not err here, but be preserved by the holy power, in the holy way, which is prepared and cast up for these: and as for that which would tear and destroy, it shall not be found on all that holy mountain where these live and feed. Yea, here is the house of God and throne of God, and God the judge of all, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, where the ransomed of the Lord enjoy the presence of the bridegroom, whom God hath set king, and who reigns on his holy hill of inward and spiritual Sion, and causeth them to sing, who feel him reign (even the everlasting seed of

life to reign inwardly in the heart). Oh! everlasting joy is upon their heads! they have obtained joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing flee away, when the joy unspeakable and full of glory is felt springing in the heart, from the sense of the presence and enjoyment of the bridegroom. For of a truth, the Lord hath comforted Sion; yea, he hath comforted many of her waste places (he was angry with her daughters, before their filth was purged away by the Spirit of judgment and burning; since that time his anger hath been turned away, and he hath comforted them, *Isai. xii. 1, &c.*); and he hath made her wilderness in many hearts like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord (even like the garden that he waters): and how can joy and gladness but be found here, with thanksgiving and the voice of melody? *Isai. lviii. 11.* and *chap. li. 3.* Thus it is with such of the gathered people and nation of the Lord, that hearken and give ear to him, and have known the way of life to proceed out of his mouth, and his judgment to rest for a light, *ver. 4.*

7 AP 59

SOME

SOME SENSIBLE,
WEIGHTY QUERIES,
CONCERNING

Some THINGS very sweet and necessary to be
experienced in the TRULY-CHRISTIAN STATE.

Whereunto is added,

A POSTSCRIPT,

CONTAINING

Some QUERIES on ISAIAH L. 10, 11.

A SCRIPTURE of Deep Counsel and Concern to the darkened
and distressed States of some among those that fear and obey
the LORD.

Written by one who hath been sorely darkened and distressed for a long
Season, but at length mercifully enlightened and comforted by the
Hand which afflicted and distressed him;

ISAAC PENINGTON.

*Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us;
he hath smitten, and he will bind us up, Hos. vi. 1.*

*And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast
angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me, ISA. xii. 1.*

A BRIEF

P R E F A C E.

INDEED the Lord hath reached unto me by his living power, and thereby hath begotten somewhat which he doth own, and which he hath taught to know and own him in his living appearances in my heart; and by its pure life and operations in me, I know it to be the true power. And truly I would fain have this life and power more and more reach to, prevail, and spread in my own heart, and in the hearts of other men: I am not for any notional religion out of the power, in any way or form whatsoever (no, indeed, I am not so much as for the very true form of godliness out of the power); but where there is any touch, any sense, any operation, any savour of the true life and power any-where, my soul loveth and embraceth it, blessing the Lord for it. And oh! that this might be visited by the Lord, wherever it is, and kept alive to the day of redemption, and led by the Lord into the pure and living way, and holy everlasting covenant of life, wherein he redeems; for which end these queries have broke forth from me: and indeed, no less than a necessity (or a necessitous force of love and life pursuing me) hath constrained me to publish them, who with reverence of spirit commit them into the hands of the Lord, who can open the hearts of whom he pleaseth, and give the living sense of what comes from him. I am satisfied that God's powerful work of redeeming will go on. Oh! blessed be his name, who hath a mighty arm, and hath done mighty things with it inwardly in mens hearts! and we are in the true faith assured that he will yet do more mighty things, as he seeth good, to the gladding of the hearts of those whose hope is in him, and who have no help besides him.



SOME SENSIBLE,
WEIGHTY QUERIES,
CONCERNING

Some THINGS very sweet and necessary to be experienced
in the TRULY-CHRISTIAN STATE.

Query 1. **W**HAT is the water wherewith the soul or inner man is to be washed, that it may be cleansed from its inward filthiness, as outward things are by washing with outward water? *Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Psal. li. 2. &c.*

Query 2. What is the answer of a good conscience towards God, when the soul is inwardly baptised and made clean? *Pet. iii. 21.*

Query 3. Christ saith, *Blessed are the pure in heart*? Do, or can, any witness purity of heart before this washing?

Query 4. How may the heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water; so that there may be a drawing near to God with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith? *Heb. x. 22. Psal. xxvi. 6.*

Query 5. How might the Jews wash and make themselves clean? *Isai. i. 16.* Could it be any otherwise done by them, than by taking heed to the word of the new covenant, nigh in the mouth and heart, to which Moses had directed them? *Deut. xxx. 14. Psal. cxix. 9.*

Query 6. What is the fire which takes hold of, and burns up the lusts and corruptions of the heart? Is it not the Word of Life within, which flames against evil, and hammers down evil? Doth not the Holy One in the midst of the spiritual Israel do this? When Christ, who knocks at the door of the heart, is let in, and his voice hearkened to, doth he not become a Spirit of judgment and burning, judging and burning up what is evil there? Is it not blessed to know this spiritual appearance, and this work of Christ in the heart? *Isai. iv. 4. and x. 17.*

Query 7. What are the enemies of a man's house? Who must overcome them? How may they be overcome? Is a man safe, or delivered from them till they be overcome? *Matt. xv. 19. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.*

Query

Query 8. What is the house of the strong man, where he dwells till he be dispossessed? Who can dispossess him? How doth he dispossess him? How doth he spoil his goods, and then garnish the house anew? Oh! what a new creation and change within is witnessed when this is done! And who would not wait, and pray, and believe, and suffer the judgings and burnings of the Spirit of judgment and burning, that this may be done thoroughly and effectually? *Luke xi. 21, 22. Isai. xxvi. 9. 2 Cor. v. 17.*

Query 9. What is that coming to Christ which none can witness but those that hear and learn of the Father, and are taught by him, in the drawings of the life and Spirit of the new covenant, to come to the Son? *John vi. 44, 45.*

Query 10. Who can confess Jesus to be the Lord by the Holy Ghost? Can any but they that receive the help of his Spirit, and feel somewhat of his lordship and holy dominion in their hearts? *Isai. xxvi. 13.*

Query 11. What is the precious faith, which is the gift of God, which none can obtain but they that are born of God? *John i. 12, 13.*

Query 12. Can any rightly believe that Jesus is the Christ, unless they receive this faith, which God gives to his own children, that are born of his Spirit, 1 *John v. 1.*

Query 13. Doth not this faith give victory over the world? (over the worldly nature and spirit within, over the worldly nature and spirit without also)? Can any other faith give victory? 1 *John v. 4.*

Query 14. What is the love of God's children? Whence doth it arise? How come they to love? Is it not of an heavenly spiritual nature? Doth it not arise from God's begetting them, and circumcising their hearts, and teaching them in the Spirit of the new covenant to love him, and one another, yea, and enemies also, 1 *John iv. 7. Deut. xxx. 6. 1 Thess. iv. 9.*

Query 15. How come the children of God, who are begotten of him, to obey his commandments? Is it not from the constrainings of his love, which makes them natural and easy (where the birth and nature is grown up) and not grievous and burdensome? *Matt. xi. 33. 1 John v. 3.*

Query 16. What is the fear God puts into the hearts of the children of the new covenant? Is it a fear taught by the precepts of men, or a fear springing from the root of life within? Can any who receive this fear from God, and who are preserved in the sense of it (and in the holy awe and reverence which it produceth) depart from the holy, tender, living God and Father? *Jer. xxxii. 40.*

Query 17. What is the law which God writes in the hearts of the children of the new covenant? Is it not the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Is it not the law which the isles wait for? *Isai. xli. 5.* And do the isles wait for it in vain? Oh! blessed be the Lord, by the once distressed and miserable-ones, in this age it hath not been waited for in vain!

Query 18. What is the truth that makes free indeed from the law of sin and death? Is it not the truth as it is in Jesus; the inward truth, which hath

hath virtue and power in it, to work against, and work out that which is contrary to truth, and so deliver and free the mind from it? For the light, which is truth, can expel darkness; the life, which is truth, can overcome death; yea, the truth, which is living, holy, and righteous, can overcome and subdue the unholy and unrighteous nature, and break down the strong-holds, and bring every rebellious and captivated thought into captivity and subjection, *John* viii. 32. *Rom.* viii. 1. *Ephes.* iv. 20, 21. *2 Cor.* x. 4, 5.

Query 19. How doth God cause the children of the new covenant to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them? Is it not by putting his Spirit into them, and by the holy virtue, power, and operation thereof in them? Doth not that make them a willing people in the day of his power? And doth not that give them to do also, and strengthen them with might in the inner man? So that not grieving that, or quenching that, that is a flame of life in them, and fills their hearts with joy; and the joy of the Lord is in their strength, and in this joy and strength they can rejoice, and work righteousness, and remember the Lord and his ways, *Isai.* lxiv. 5. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 27.

Query 20. Can any work righteousness, or do righteousness, but he that is truly righteous, inwardly righteous, in whom the righteousness of God, the righteousness of Christ, is revealed from faith to faith? Must not the tree be good, before the fruit can be good? Must not the heart be changed, be made holy and righteous, before it can bring forth that which is holy and righteous? Can any but the plants of God, the plants of righteousness, bring forth the fruits of righteousness? *Isai.* lxi. 3. and *1 John* iii. 7.

Oh! that people, nations, tongues, and languages, could understandingly, sensibly, and experimentally, as in God's sight, with the seal of his blessed Spirit, answer every one of these things!

THREE QUERIES more added.

Query 1. **D**OST thou indeed know the new covenant? Hast thou inwardly felt the spiritual powerful gathering by the mighty arm and power of the Lord, out of the sinful nature and state, into it? Dost thou abide with God therein? Art thou daily taught and fed by him there? These are very weighty things. Can any man be safe or happy without experiencing them? *Heb.* viii. 8. &c.

Query 2. Hast thou experienced the true hunger and thirst after the living waters? Hast thou been called and led to them? Hast thou eat and drank the bread, wine, and milk which those waters yield? Hast thou been abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and hath he given thee to drink of the river of his pleasure? Hath the Lord opened an ear in thee to hear:

hear as the learned? And hast thou inclined thine ear, and come unto him who gives life, and received him who is life, and gives life in that inward, spiritual, living appearance of his in the heart, wherein and whereby he gives life? Hast thou known his appearance inwardly, as of a living stone? Hast thou heard and learned of the Father how to come to him, as to a living stone? And hast thou been new-created and formed a living stone by him? And art thou a living stone, built upon him the living stone inwardly in spirit, daily living in him, and daily receiving spiritual life and virtue from him? If it be thus with thee, then surely thou dost know and enjoy the everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David, *Isai.* lv. 1, 2, 3. *Psal.* xxxvi. 8, 9. *1 Pet.* ii. 4, 5.

Query 3. Dost thou sensibly and experimentally know how the Spirit of the Father begets the child-like life, love, and fear in the heart; and how the pure fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the living child's treasure? And dost thou know what the womb is wherein the living child is formed? What the Jerusalem above is, which is the mother of all that are truly living? And how Christ is formed in all that are begotten, and born of, and live in the Spirit? *Isai.* xxxiii. 6. *Gal.* iv. 26. *John* iii. 6. 8. *Gal.* iv. 19.

The C O N C L U S I O N.

OH! how miserable is he who is deceived about these things! Oh! how happy is he who hath received the true understanding from God, which cannot be deceived; wherein he hath the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit concerning them, and knoweth the truth as it is in Jesus; as it is in his life, in his Spirit, in his power, who ministers after the power of an endless life, unto all his sheep, who are returned to the shepherd and bishop of the soul, who hear his voice and follow him, where-ever he goes or leads, who is an eternal Shepherd, and eternal Door of life to his, and leads to precious pastures, and sweet still streams of life, and is giving the sweet food, rest, and pure pleasure of eternal life unto his abundantly; even as it is his will, that after their many sore trials, exercises, and travels (and faithfulness to him therein) they should abundantly possess and enjoy it. Glory to the Lord for ever, whose kingdom is set up in the hearts of many, and who already reigns in the hearts of many, and will reign in the hearts of more! Oh! that men might hear the sound of his everlasting gospel, and learn to fear him, and give glory to him, and know the hour of his judgment come in their own hearts, that by his judgment against sin and unrighteousness in them, they might come to know and worship him; and then the worship of the dragon and beast would soon come to an end in their hearts; and they would worship the begetter of holiness, the begetter of life, the king of saints, who dwells and rules in those that are his own,

P O S T S C R I P T.

305

own, as the devil the destroyer doth in those that are his! The Lord God of everlasting power break down the kingdom of Satan (the kingdom of unrighteousness and darkness in mens hearts) and exalt the kingdom and scepter of his own Son instead thereof. *Amen.*

P O S T S C R I P T.

Containing some QUERIES ON ISAI. L. IO, II.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? It is rendered in another translation: And no light shineth upon him (which was Job's case in his great affliction, as is signified by him, chap. xxix. 2, 3.) Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Ver. 10.

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass about with sparks, walk in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks ye have kindled, this ye shall have of mine hand: ye shall lie down in sorrow. Ver. 11.

Query 1. **D**O TH not the tender and merciful God many times, in the bowels of his love and mercy, bring darkness and great distress upon mens spirits, that they might wait for his healing and redemption? Yea, doth not this befall some who fear the Lord, and are found in the holy reverence and obedience to him? And is it not good that it should befall them?

Query 2. Should not men, in such a condition of darkness and distress, trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon him till he cause light to arise out of obscurity, and comfort them that mourn in Sion; giving them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?

Query 3. Are not persons very prone and liable, in time of darkness and distress, instead of waiting upon God for his help and salvation, to be kindling a fire, and compassing themselves about with sparks?

Query 4. Are there not some who cannot be content without heat and warmth in their religion and performances, and yet, instead of waiting for God's kindling the fire, and his causing the sparks of life to arise, kindle a fire of themselves, and compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling?

Query 5. May not men, after they have kindled a fire and sparks, walk in the light thereof? And may not God, in his just judgment and sore displeasure against them, leave them to themselves, and give them up so to do?

Query 6. What will God do in the end, or what in the end shall befall them from God, who kindle a fire and sparks, and have continued walking

in the light thereof, and have been heated and warmed thereby? Will not God cause them at length to lie down in sorrow? Oh! that persons that are serious in religion, might not thus err, and so provoke God to give them up to walk in the light of the fire and sparks of their own kindling!

Query 7. When do men kindle a fire and sparks of their own? Do they not first forget the God of their salvation, and become unmindful of the rock of their strength? And do they not then plant pleasant plants, and set strange slips? (And where do they plant and set them?) But what will the harvest be in the day of inheritance, when they come to reap and inherit what they have planted and sown? (For what a man soweth, that must he also reap). Will it not be a heap for the fire of God's jealousy to take hold on, in the day of their tribulation, anguish, and desperate sorrow of heart? *Isai. xvii. 10, 11.*

Query 3. In what light do men build up a wall inwardly, and daub it with untempered mortar, to secure themselves from the wrath to come? Is it not in the light of the fire and sparks of their own kindling? Will any wall or defence built up in the light of this fire or sparks secure men? Will not the wrath of God, in the day thereof, break forth upon all the workers of iniquity, whatever their faith or hope be to the contrary? Will any wall defend the soul from the overflowing storm of wrath, but the wall of God's salvation? And can any enter within that wall, but the righteous nation that keepeth the truth? *Isai. xxvi. 1, 2.* The name of the Lord indeed is a strong tower; but can any run into it, and get shelter in it, but the righteous? *Prov. xviii. 10.*

Query 9. Who is he, who, when he falleth, shall arise again; and after he hath sat in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto him? Is it not he that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that in the time of his darkness and distress trusteth in the name of the Lord, and stays upon his God? Yea, is it not such an one as is willing to bear the indignation of the Lord, because he hath sinned against him, until he plead his cause, and execute judgment for him? Will not the Lord bring forth such an one to the light, and shall not such an one behold his righteousness? *Mic. vii. 8, 9.*

Query 10. When shall persons light arise in obscurity, and their darkness be as the noon-day? When shall their light break forth as the morning, and their health spring forth speedily, and their righteousness go before them, and the glory of the Lord gather them up? And when shall the Lord be their continual guide, and satisfy their soul in drougths, and make fat their bones, and make them like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not? Are not these promises belonging to the gospel state? And are they not fulfilled in the gospel state, as people come to know and keep the gospel fast, and the gospel sabbath? Read *Isai. lviii. 6.*

POSTSCRIPT.

307

to the end, and wait on the Lord, to receive understanding from him, that in reading thou mayest understand.

Oh! that men knew the gospel fast, and the gospel sabbath, with the feasts of unleavened bread, tabernacles, trumpets, &c. A little of the knowledge of the mystery of the hidden life and power, is of more value, and would do their souls more good, than heaps of literal knowledge where-with the world is so filled. The knowledge of God and Christ in the mystery is no less than life eternal, in them and to them, who are taught in the new covenant, or ministration of the power of the endless life, so to know them.



R 12

THE

302

THE

EVERLASTING GOSPEL

O F

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST,



BLESSED EFFECTS thereof, testified to from
Experience.

By ISAAC PENINGTON.

The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. 1 JOHN ii. 8.

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. ISAI. lx. 2.

When the Lord shall build up Sion, he shall appear in his glory. PSAL. cii. 16. (indeed he doth so).

THE
EVERLASTING GOSPEL
OF
Our LORD JESUS CHRIST,
AND THE

BLESSED EFFECTS thereof, testified to from Experience.

THE blessed message which the apostles (who were sent by Christ to preach the gospel) heard of Christ, and were to declare to others, was, *That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,*
1 John i. 5.

The end of Christ's sending them with this message was, that thereby (preaching it in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit) they might *open mens eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in him,* Acts xxvi. 18.

Now the eye of the mind being opened, and the mind turned from the darkness within to the light within, and from Satan's power to the power of God, which is revealed in the light, the soul in the light comes to see (over the darkness, and Satan who darkened it) the things of God and his kingdom, as they are revealed in the light, which makes them manifest.

As, First, It sees him, who is the rock, the holy foundation of God, the holy foundation of life in the soul; the living stone, by which all the other living stones are made alive, and they are taught of God to come to him as to a living stone, and so are built upon him, and become God's building and new creation in him, 1 Pet. ii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17. And here, in this light, none can miss of the true coming, hearing the voice of the Father, and being drawn and taught by him to come to the Son, John vi. 44, 45.

Secondly,

Secondly, Here the true Jew's state, the state of the inward Jew, and the inward circumcision, and the true worship (even the worship of the Father in Spirit and truth) is known. For the Jew inward is a child of light, begotten in the light, redeemed out of darkness, and dwells and walks in the light, as God is in the light, 1 *John* i. 7. And the circumcision is not a fleshly act; but the cutting off of that which is fleshly from the mind by the Spirit and power of Christ. And the gospel worship, or the worship of the Jew inward, is the worshipping of God in the newness of the life of his Son.

Thirdly, Here is the true repentance from the dead nature and dead works, which no man can attain to of himself; but is God's gift through his Son, whom God hath appointed to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, *Acts* v. 31. I say here, that repentance is known, waited for, and received. For not to men in the darkness, and loving the darkness, is the true repentance given; but to them that are turned to the light, to them is repentance given unto life, *Acts* xi. 18. compared with *chap.* xxvi. 17, 18.

Fourthly, Here the true faith, the precious gift of faith is received, whereby men believe in him who gives life, and receive life from him. And this is the faith which gives access to God, and gives victory over the world, and that which is contrary to God: the faith which is given in the light doth so; but the faith which men have in the darkness doth not so.

Fifthly, Here the cross of Christ is known, which is an inward, living, spiritual thing, effectually crucifying that man that takes it up, and daily bears it, to all that is earthly and sinful; and then the pure seed and life of Christ springs up in his earth, over the world, and every worldly thing, *Gal.* vi. 14.

Sixthly, Here the pure love springs in the heart, both to him that begets, and to him that is begotten. In the light there is nothing but love; but in the darkness there is no true love to be found; but the very love that is found there, is of the nature of enmity. It is the light of truth that purifieth the heart to the love unfeigned, 1 *Pet.* i. 22. *Deut.* xxx. 6.

Seventhly, Here the Lamb's patience and meekness is experienced, and the soul adorned with it. The Lamb is the light of the world, and they that are made lambs by him, partake of his sweet and meek nature, learning of him to be meek and lowly in heart, and so have that patience and meekness from him *which no other can attain to*, *Matt.* xi. 29.

Eighthly, In the light the precious promises are fulfilled and partook of; which make them who partake of them, and in whom they are fulfilled, partakers of the divine nature; for the divine nature is not partook of in the darkness, but in him who is light. Man (who is darkness) cannot partake of the promises which belong to the children of light; but when, by the operation of God's power, his state and nature is changed, and he is

now

now no more darkness, but light in the Lord, then the promises which were made to the children of light he cometh to have a share in, *Eph. v. 8. 2 Pet. i. 4.*

Lastly, In the light the holy anointing is received, the voice of Christ heard, and the new everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David, made with the soul, *Isai. lv. 3.* The law of the new covenant (even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) written in the mind, and the holy fear of the new covenant, which cleanseth and keepeth clean, put in the heart, and the blessed Spirit of the Father given and received, which gives to those that receive it power to become the sons of God, causing them to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and to do them. Oh! blessed dispensation of life and holy power, which the Lord hath caused to break forth among a despised people in these latter days! Oh! that the sons of men would hear and understand this precious loving-kindness of the Lord, and put their trust under the shadow of his wings, and know what it is to be satisfied with the fatness of his spiritual gospel house, and to drink of the river of his pleasures, and in his light to see light, *Psal. xxxvi. 7, 8, 9.*

This opened in me this morning, in love and compassion towards the Papists. My bowels have often rolled over them, and been pained concerning them, to see how they are closed and shut up as to the true sense and understanding of things of this nature. Oh! that they would prize the day of their visitation, that they might hear the sound of life both from others, and also in their own hearts, and the saving arm of the Lord might be inwardly revealed to them, and they effectually redeemed thereby!

I am no disdainer of Papists, or any sort of Protestants, nay, not of Turks or Jews; but a mourner because of their several mistakes, and a breather to the God of my life for tender mercy towards them all.

Astrop, 13th of the Seventh Month, 1678.

P O S T S C R I P T.

AND in this light the true church, the gospel church, the New Testament church, is known; which is a church of the children of light, a building built in the light, which church is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, *2 Thess. i. 1.* In whom they are built together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit, *Ephes. ii. 22.* Yea, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord, *ver. 21.* (for the Lord frameth them fitly together into a spiritual and holy building). And all that are here gathered out of the darkness into the light, who walk in the light, and abide in the light, are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, *ver. 20.* And are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, *ver. 19.*

The gospel church is the spiritual house of Jacob, which walk in the light of the Lord, *Isai. ii. 5.* who go up to the mountain of the Lord (to that which is revealed to be the mountain of God in the last days, even spiritual Mount Sion, *Heb. xii. 22.*), to the house of the God of Jacob, where he teacheth his spiritual people, the inward Jews, of his ways, and they learn to walk in his paths: for out of this Sion shall go forth the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (in the days of the gospel) and the Word of the Lord from this Jerusalem, *ver. 2, 3.* For Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of all the children which are born of God's Spirit, *Gal. iv. 26. John iii. 6.* And she being the mother of them all, nourisheth them all with the Word of life, which goeth forth from her; and all her children know and justify her their mother, *Matt. xi. 19.* Oh! that all, both Papists and Protestants, knew this true mother-church, this mother of all the living, of whom none but the living are born, and who nourisheth all the living, and none else, with the law and Word of eternal life!

And if they knew the true church, the church which is of the true Jews, the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and did live and walk in the light of the Lamb, and follow the leader, the Shepherd of Israel, and faithful bishop of the soul, who overseeth and taketh care of the soul, they would learn, and come to know and experience these things following:

First, The dwelling-places of Mount Sion, and her assemblies, and God's creating upon every of them a *cloud and smock* by day, and the shining of a flaming

flaming fire by night, which is the defence upon all the glory that the Lord bringeth forth among his spiritual church and people, *Isai. iv. 5.*

Secondly, They would know the land of the inward Jews, and spiritual Judah, and the song sung therein, because of the strong city which the Lord builds there, and the salvation which he appoints for walls and bulwarks about it; and would see and know how none but the inward Jews, the inwardly circumcised and sanctified, even the righteous nation that keepeth the truth, can enter by the gates into that city, *Isai. xxvi. 1, 2.* And they that dwell in that city, whose minds are stayed on the Lord, and who trust in him, the Lord will keep in perfect peace, *ver. 3.* Then Jerusalem is a quiet habitation indeed, and the resting and feeding-places in it are sure, *Isai. xxxii. 18. and chap. xxxiii. 15. 20.*

Thirdly, They would know the feast of fat things, which the Lord of hosts makes to all people that are here; to all people that come up to, and dwell on, his holy mountain, and serve and worship him in Spirit and truth. The Lord of hosts maketh such a feast as no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive what it is, but only by the Spirit of God; even a feast of fat things, even a feast of spiritual fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined, *Isai. xxv. 6.* They that are turned to the light, and follow Christ the light, shall not abide in darkness, but have the light of life, *John viii. 12.* Shall be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the dear Son, and they shall sup with Christ, and he with them, and both together drink of the fruit of the vine of life new in the Father's kingdom.

Fourthly, They shall infallibly know here, in this light which shines on God's holy mountain, the destroying or swallowing up of the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations, *Isai. xxv. 7.* For the veil is cast over and spread in the darkness; but is done away and swallowed up in Christ the light: for the veil is done away in him, *2 Cor. iii. 14.* And all that are in Christ, in his Spirit, in the light and liberty thereof, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord, *ver. 17, 18.*

Lastly, Here the king of righteousness's highway is known, even the way of holiness, which the unclean cannot pass over; but the sanctified in the light do walk in; and the wayfaring men here, though fools, do not err in, *Isai. xxxv. 8.* For they that are taught of God in the new covenant, and follow the leading of his blessed Spirit, do not err.

Oh! that the true church were known, which is now come and coming out of the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved, who led and

leads her out thence, into her own land of life and glory, where her light shines, and she ariseth and standeth upon her feet before the Lord, and the glory of the Lord shines upon her, and covers her! Happy is the eye that seeth this, and the soul that hath a share in it!

7 AP 59

A Further

Further Testimony to TRUTH,

Revived out of the

R U I N S of the A P O S T A S Y:

O R,

**Several Things opened from the SPIRIT of TRUTH,
touching the Way of Life and Salvation;**

WHICH WILL

**Reach to the Witnesses in the Hearts of those whose Spirits are
quicken'd, and whose Ears and Understandings are opened by
the Spirit and Power of the LORD.**

Written in a deep Sense, and tender Love,

By I S A A C P E N I N G T O N.

*Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.
For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people;
but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And
the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and the kings to the brightness of thy
rising. ISAI. lx. 1, 2, 3.*

*O house of Jacob! come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.
ISAI. ii. 5.*

T H E
P R E F A C E.



OH! how excellent and precious is the name of the Lord, in this our day, among his people, whom he hath gathered out of the worldly spirit unto himself, and whom he mightily defendeth in that wherein he hath gathered them! Infomuch as it may now be said inwardly, as it was of old outwardly, PsAL. lxxvi. "In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Sion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle, Selah." Oh! what mighty things hath the Lord God done in and for the spirits of his people! How hath he scattered the darkness from about them, broke the chains which held them in captivity! How hath he risen up against all the enemies of their souls, discovered their snares, snapped in sunder the weapons of war, which the spirit of darkness hath formed and lifted up against them! And how hath he preserved them in life, in peace, in purity, in holiness, in his power and dominion (over that spirit and the devices thereof) to this very day! He lives and reigns in power over all; and because he lives, we live also; and because he reigns, those that are in his life and Spirit partake of his holy reign and dominion (over sin, hell, death, and the powers of darkness) with him. Lo! this is our God; this is he whom we have sought after, and waited for; and now his power is made manifest, now his righteousness and salvation is revealed, how can our souls but be glad and rejoice therein! Yea, how can we conceal the good tidings of the day of our God, and of the gospel of his salvation, which hath arisen and broke in upon us! How can we but desire to awaken the minds of men out of their sleep, and call upon them to shake off the drowsiness and blackness of the night, and to lift up their eyes towards the hill and mountain of God's holiness, that they also may behold the beauty of his day in others, and wait for the springing of his life and glory in themselves!

Now there is somewhat revealed of God, of his own nature, power, and Spirit, wherein we have met with him. To this we invite, of this we speak, concerning this we testify, as being that which the Father will honour, and wherein he hath and will appear. It is a poor, weak, low thing to consider of, or behold with the eye and understanding of man; but there

P R E F A C E.

cccxvii

is the riches, the glory, the life, the righteousness, the peace, the joy, the everlasting power of the kingdom in it; and to them that receive it in the demonstration of God's Spirit, and in the love of it, it is the wisdom of God and his power to the redemption and salvation of their souls. Indeed of all the wise builders (out of the true sense and power) it is rejected at this day, as it always was of old; but to us who are called of God, taught by him, who have received an understanding from him, &c. we know the value of that which comes from him, being instructed by him not to judge according to the appearance, but to judge the righteous judgment; and in the righteous judgment, in the balance of the sanctuary, we find this little despised light to be elect and precious, even the foundation-stone, the corner-stone, and the top-stone of the building of God. And this we testify to men in true love, and from certain knowledge and experience which we have received from him that is true, and hold in him that is true.

Now this precious pearl (of which we testify) lies hid deep within; and thither must men come to know it, to purchase it, to possess it; and thither it is the desire of our hearts to bring men. Nor do we open the things of God before men to this end, that they might get a knowledge thereof into their brains, and feed on it there; but through tender love we bring these things a little into the very view of men (as the Lord enables us); not that they might stick there, but that having a taste of the excellency and beauty of truth, they might be inflamed (with desires after it) to travel thither, where it is to be had. Therefore dwell not in the notion, delight not in the outward knowledge of the thing itself (though the knowledge be ever so sweet, pleasing, satisfactory, and demonstrative to the mind); but come to the everlasting spring. Feel the measure of life in thy particular, and that will lead thee to the spring of life, from whence the measure comes as a gift from the Father to thee, to bring thee to the Father. And singly for this end have I been drawn to write what follows, in service to the Lord, in faithfulness to him, in dear love to the souls of men, especially of those who have formerly been travellers, and have felt somewhat of the Lord, and yet retain desires and breathings in their hearts after him. Oh! that the Lord would touch their spirits, discover to them the way everlasting, and lead them therein to do that which their souls darkly desire and seek after; to which there is no other way than that which hath been from the beginning, only there have been various discoveries and manifestations of the one way! But what greater discovery can there be than of the thing or seed itself, which the Lord hath been pleased to make manifest in this day of his glorious mercy, love, and power, whereof he hath raised up many witnesses, whom he hath enabled (by his Spirit and power) to give a living, clear, certain testimony to? Happy is the ear that hears! for that also must be of God, as the message and messengers are known to be.

A FURTHER
TESTIMONY to TRUTH.

Some **QUERIES** concerning **CHRIST's** Righteousness, how it justifieth. Whether as inwardly revealed and dwelling in the Heart, or only as imputed, or both.

Query 1. **I**S not Christ the righteousness and justification of the soul with God? Is not he made of God unto us righteousness, and are not we made the righteousness of God in him? How is this done? Is it not by being ingrafted into him, covered with him? Is this a meer imputation? or is it not rather a bringing the soul into the thing itself, and a drawing his nature, life, and Spirit over the soul, which was and is always righteous in itself, and so accounted with God? And he that is found in him, clothed with him, emptied of himself, and filled with him, is he not really righteous in the sight of God?

Query 2. Is not the principle of life, which is from Christ, of the same nature with Christ? is not it also holy and righteous? yea, is not Christ the fullness in it? And he that receiveth this principle, doth he not receive life, receive Christ, receive righteousness? Can the righteousness of Christ be separated from the seed of his life, nature, and Spirit? Can a man deny himself, go out of himself, give up to that, and be found in that, and not found in the righteousness? or can a man come to righteousness by imputation without that?

Query 3. This principle or seed of life being from Christ, of Christ, and one with Christ in nature, though not of the same stature and fullness, yet hath it not the property and virtue of all that is of Christ in it? Do not all the promises belong to this seed, and go along with this seed? Doth not all that is good in man spring up from this seed? He that receives this, doth he not receive that which is righteous, and which makes him righteous, so far as he is of it, and in it? yea, the sacrifice of Christ in the flesh, the virtue thereof, the forgiveness of the Father for the sake of his Son; doth it not go along with this? and is it not accepted for that man who

is

is found here, and his iniquities (which he committed formerly) freely forgiven him for his name's sake? Yea, are not his sins afterwards also blotted out upon the same terms, he returning to this, abiding in this, and being found in this, and wherein the remission of sin, and the power against sin, is alone to be felt and received for ever? So here is the imputation in its right place, and the right use and pleading of the sacrifice of the Son, which here (in this its proper place, and in this state) prevails with God, and not otherwise. For the kingdom, the righteousness, the peace, the joy, the power thereof, &c. is placed by God in this seed, which is as a grain of mustard seed: and he that ever finds it, must so find it; and he that ever joins to it, must so join to it; and he that ever receiveth it aright, must so receive it.

Query 4. Is not he that is born of God, new created in Christ Jesus? and is not the new creature and new creation righteous in the sight of God? When Adam was created at first, he was created in God's image; and was not that image righteous, and he righteous in that image? And when man is regenerated, renewed, brought again into the image, is not the image again holy and righteous, and he in the image?

Query 5. Is not faith the gift of God? And is it not holy, spiritual, and righteous in its own nature, and in the creature to whom it is given? And being given to the creature, is it not owned by God as such, and so justified in the creature? Is not the faith which is of God, as righteous as the unbelief from the root of bitterness is unrighteous? And doth not God own and justify that as righteous, as well as condemn and reject the other as unrighteous?

Query 6. Is not the obedience of the soul in Christ, and from the principle of his life in the soul, and through his Spirit, righteous? nay, as righteous and justifiable in the sight of God, as the disobedience of the first nature is unrighteous?

Query 7. Are not all the works which are wrought in God, righteous? and doth not he that doth truth, bring them to the light, that it may be made manifest that they are wrought in God (*John iii. 21.*) Now there is no condemnation, but justification, to the deeds that are wrought in God; as there is no justification, but condemnation, to the works that are wrought out of him.

So that here now he that is indeed of God, he that is new created in Christ Jesus, he knows the Father and fountain of righteousness, the Son of righteousness, the righteous seed, the righteous faith and obedience of the seed, and the works which are wrought by the power and in the Spirit, which being brought to the true light, are always justified by it.

Concerning the True CHURCH and MINISTRY.

THERE is a great noise in the world about church and ministry. Many are affirming which is it, and many are doubtful and enquiring about it; and many are truly and groundedly satisfied, having received the knowledge of the thing from God, who is not deceived about it, nor deceiveth any, but giveth the true understanding of these and other things, to them that wait upon him aright; to wit, in his fear, and in the silence of the fleshly wise part before him. Now I have a testimony to give concerning these things, which that ear which is of God can hear, and to that I desire to speak.

That is the church which is the spiritual body of Christ. The church is Christ's spouse, he the husband. The head is living, and so are all the members of the body. The head is anointed, and the oil wherewith the head is anointed, runs down from the head upon all the body; and that upon which the oil runs not, is none of the body. Now no outward thing can make one a member of this body; much less can any outward thing, way, profession or practice, make a church. The church under the law was made so by outward things, by an outward gathering, an outward circumcision, an outward law, an outward worship, &c. but the gospel is a state of substance, a state of the invisible things, of persons invisibly gathered by the Spirit into the life and power of God, inwardly circumcised, inwardly baptised with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, inwardly worshipping in Spirit and truth, bowing at every sound and name of the Lord Jesus: and what is of an outward state here, is brought forth and preserved by the power of the inward appearing, and dwelling in it. So that this is the church now: a people gathered by the life and Spirit of the Lord; a people gathered by the power from on high, abiding in the power, acting in the power, worshipping in the power, keeping in the holy order and government of life (both inwardly in their own hearts, and outwardly in their assemblings and walkings) by the power. Christ was made a king, priest, and prophet, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life; and in this power he gathers, governs, and preserves his church, and ministereth from, and by, his Spirit and power in it. Now find this power of the endless life, find a people any-where gathered by this power, and in this power; there is the church, there is the living body, there is Christ the head, whose dominion and strength is over all, against whom the gates of hell cannot prevail.

And so for the ministers of this church. The same thing that gives to know the church, gives to know the ministers thereof; for they also are
of

Concerning the true Church and Ministry. 321

of God, called by him, receiving power from him, and abiding and ministering in that power. So that there are three things requisite to a true ministry, without which they cannot be right, or execute their office rightly.

1. *They must be called by God.* The ministry under the law, this was their warrant; they were called and appointed of God thereunto. Christ himself took not the honour to himself, but he was called of God to this priesthood, as Aaron to his. So the apostles and ministers, in the first publication of the gospel, were called and appointed by Christ. And when the everlasting gospel is again to be preached, God sends his angel with it, as *Rev. iv. 6.*

2. *They must receive ability and power from God.* The elders that were to help Moses, were to receive of his spirit. Under the law, the priests were to be anointed with the outward literal oil, and the ministers of the gospel are to be anointed with the inward spiritual oil. Their work is spiritual; and how can they perform it, but by the anointing, by that presence, guidance, life, virtue, and power of the Spirit, putting itself forth in them? The apostles themselves, who had been taught by Christ, who knew his conversation and doctrine, who were eye-witnesses of what they were to publish, and had received an authority and commission from him, yet were not to go forth merely upon this call and commission, but to wait for power from on high; and when they had received the Spirit and power, then they were made able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit and power.

3. *They must abide in the power, keep in the power, feel the motion, virtue, and assistance of the power, in all their work and service.* They must neither pull down, nor build up, nor watch over, or oversee the flock in their own wisdom, in their own spirit, in their own wills; but in the anointing, in the light and guidance of the Lord. This gathering, this building, this work of the Lord begins out of flesh, out of man; and flesh must be kept out of the whole carrying on of it.

And indeed unless the ministers of the gospel be in the Spirit, in the life, in the power, how can they minister to the nature, to the spirit, to the life in the body? yea, so much as to the least member in the body? They may minister outward knowledge to the man's wisdom, to the man's understanding; but that is not the food that is to be ministered to the church, nor is that part in man to be fed by the true minister. But they are to minister life (living food) from the living fountain, from the head, from the Spirit of Christ in them, to the particular members under their charge; and so are to be good stewards and shepherds to the flock, giving every one their proper portion in due season.

It was no small matter to be a minister under the law. It was easy to err, and minister amiss then. It was easy erring from the letter, unless great care and circumspection was used to keep strictly to it.

But it is a much more weighty thing to minister under the gospel, to receive the power, to minister in the power, to that which is begotten and born of the power. And this is precious, and (without controversy) of God, wherever it is found. But they only that are of God, can hear and receive this ministry, (as 1 John iv. 6.) The uncircumcised ear cannot hear here, nor the wise and knowing according to the flesh. The wisdom of God is foolishness to him, and the mysteries of his kingdom (the mystery of his life, and the true godliness) are riddles, and direct madness to the eye of his wisdom: so far is man degenerated from God, and bound down with chains of darkness and corruption. And he that would know the true church, or be of it, and hear the voice of God in his true ministry, must first take up the cross to that part in him which is not of God, and receive from God the eye which sees, and the ear which hears.

An OBJECTION concerning the Newness of the
WAY OF TRUTH, answered: With a tender expostulating EXHORTATION.

Object. **I***t is objected against us, that this which we testify to, hold forth, and practise, is a new way, sprung up of late, never known nor heard of in the world till some few years ago.*

Ans. The light eternal, when it shineth out of the darkness, after the great apostasy from the Spirit and life of the apostles, is new indeed to those that were overwhelmed and buried in the darkness of the night, and so never saw or heard of it before; but it is not new in itself, but the same that it was from the beginning. This seed of life, this seed of blessing, is the same that was promised at first to bruise the serpent's head. The same which was promised to Abraham, when the gospel was preached to him. The same that saved all (that believed in it) under the law; for it was not the types and shadows, and outward ordinances, which saved the soul then, but the seed, who was the Saviour from the beginning, and is the Saviour all along, even to the end: and it was the same which was the gospel in the days of the apostles. They preached the seed also, the word of faith; Christ the way, Christ the power. Yea, all along the times of the apostasy, this was the thing that preserved the witnesses, saving them from being swallowed up in the darkness, and keeping them alive in their testimony. And there is no other thing held forth now by those who are in the truth, and raised up by the power of God in it to give testimony to it. This is it from whence life hath sprung in any that have felt life, in all ages and generations. *This is the root and offspring of David, the bright and the*

the morning-star. This is the desire of all nations (Oh! that they knew their desire) *and their saving health too*, without which they can never be healed! And O ye! who ever felt any thing of God at any time, which was true, either in reading the scriptures, or hearing a ministry, or in private breathings, &c. this was it which gave you to feel in that state, to desire after the Lord, to turn from vanity, to long for communion with him, &c. Oh! that ye were so far in it now as ye have been in times past! For there is no other thing we testify to you of (or desire to draw you to) than that which was the root and strength of your life in those days. I remember that time very well, and what I was and felt among you, nor can I deny it at this day, but know that it was of the Lord; yea, my soul blesteth his name in the remembrance of it: but he that sticks in the letter of that (having lost the life thereof) is in a dead state before the Lord; and in that dead state hath not the true sense and feeling, and then must needs err and mistake concerning the truth, and (in that error) make use of his wisdom and knowledge to resist and oppose it. And this brings more death and darkness upon the soul, insomuch as the very light there becomes darkness, and the very life dead; and if they could truly look inwards, they would see that they are not now there, what once they were, nor their duties or ordinances (as they account them) such; but a blasting and withering is come upon them, from the Spirit and power of the Lord, and they have lost their beauty and freshness, to all that with a true eye behold them. Therefore come back to the life; know that which formerly gave you life. Is it removed? stick not behind, but follow on. Oh! know the Lamb, who is the leader! And this is the great duty of duties to follow him whithersoever he goes. He may in his tender mercy visit in Egypt, in Sodom, in Babylon: but these are not the places of his rest, nor so to be esteemed, because he once appeared, visited, touched, refreshed the soul there. But his dwelling-place is Sion, his holy city is Jerusalem, where the Christians dwelt with him before the apostasy, and where those that are redeemed out of the apostasy, are again to dwell. For the darkness of the night is not to diminish or take away any of the beauty or brightness of the day for ever; but the brightness and beauty of the day, in its rising and glorious growth, is to overcome and swallow it up. Therefore lose no more time in disputings, in thoughts, in reasonings, in consultings, with that which will never advise the soul for its good; but wait on the Lord, that ye may come (through his leadings) to the true sense of his seed, to the feeling of the nature of his eternal light and life in the heart; and that will put an end to disputes; yea, scatter the disputing mind, and powerfully determine the controversy in the pure sense and demonstration of the Spirit. And he that knoweth any thing of this, let him abide here, wait here, live here, dwell here, and breathe to the Father here, watching narrowly over that which would lead from hence, and draw the mind into another way, wisdom, and spirit. And thus, O poor soul! if the Lord touch thine heart, and

324 *A Caution to those who are at any Time*

open thine eye, thou wilt see thy beloved, even the choicest among ten thousand; whom none can parallel, whom nothing is like to for excellency of nature, nor is there any can do for the soul as he! It is felt, it is experienced, it is testified unto you in the love, and in the truth: oh! that ye could hear! They are not the words of the letter, nor the observation of all that is in the letter, that can give life; but his voice gives life. The words that he speaks (at any time) are Spirit and life; and if he speak them not; *but* letter. So this is it we live upon; not the bread which we can make; not the things we can gather or comprehend from the letter; but the words which proceed from the mouth of God. Now this seed is his mouth, in and through which he speaks to our souls, who fear before him, and wait upon him, in his own eternal and everlasting ordinance, at the door and posts of the everlasting wisdom. And here we meet with all in substance, in life, in freshness, in purity, in power, that ever we met with of God; and we meet with somewhat more also than we formerly met with. And this testimony is given forth to you in the love of God, from his tender bowels, which know your present state, your wants, your wanderings, your deep prejudices and settled hardness against his truth; yet he remembers the days of your youth, and cannot give over seeking after you, and crying unto you, *Oh! when will ye turn, when will ye hear, when will ye wait to feel life in the Spirit, and not increase death in you from the letter!*

A C A U T I O N TO THOSE

Who are at any Time touched with the Power of TRUTH; how they afterwards hearken to and let in the Enemy, and so thereby have the good Seed stolen away, the true Sense lost, and the Mind filled with Prejudices and Stumbling-blocks instead thereof.

THE Truth of God being received into the inward parts, is found to be of a living powerful nature, working mightily there for the cleansing and redeeming of the hearts. Yea, this is certainly witnessed, that

as the mind joined to deceit, is thereby defiled; so the mind joined to the truth of God, is by its power and virtue purified.

Now having felt this, and being filled with the love and good-will of God to the souls of others, how can we but testify it to others, who stand in need of God's truth (and its cleansing property and virtue) as well as we; especially being thereunto moved and drawn by the Spirit of the Lord?

Now when the Lord giveth forth the sound in its power and life, it many times pierceth deeply through the earthly veil, and reacheth to its own; which (being reached to) answers to the testimony, saying, it is Truth. So here is a beginning of the work of God in that heart, the soul being touched with his truth, feeling it inwardly, and yielding in some measure to the overcoming virtue and power of it.

But then comes the subtil one, whose design and labour is to undermine and overturn the work of God in the soul; and he begets doubts, and jealousies, and questionings, both concerning us, and concerning the doctrine taught by us, to suggest into the mind, as if it were not (nor indeed could be) of God: and so bringing the dispute and determination into another part than where truth got entrance, he easily sways the mind to determine against its own former feeling, and to turn from that work which was begun to be wrought in it by God, and from the worker also. And thus many poor hearts are entangled and carried back into captivity, who began to feel the stirrings of truth in their hearts (wherein is the power of redemption) which would have redeemed them as well as others, had they received it in the love of it, and became subject to it.

Oh! it is a precious thing to receive from God a spirit of discerning, which gives ability to discern his Spirit from the spirit of deceit! yea, it is impossible to be preserved in the right Spirit and way, but as this is felt. For how can the Lord be received in all the motions and operations of his Spirit? or how can the contrary spirit be turned from in all its subtil devices, twistings, and reasonings in the mind, unless there be a discerning (in the true light of the Lord) what is of the one and what of the other?

And ye that would not be deceived, sink deep beneath the thoughts, reasonings, and consultations of the earthly mind, that ye may meet with somewhat of the kingdom and power (which carries its own evidence and demonstration with it) and may be gathered into it, and find a sense, knowledge, and judgment there, which never was deceived nor can deceive. Know the elect of God, which the deceits pass over and cannot reach; for its nature and birth is beyond them. It came from the light of the Father. It lives in the light of the Father. It sees in that light; yea, there its judgment and understanding is, where deceit never had power to enter. But he that considers as a man, sees as a man, judges as a man, concerning the things of God, by what he can gather out of the scriptures, or conclude from his own sense, knowledge, and experience, he may easily err; yea, indeed, he is in the way of error in so doing. For the pure religion, the
pure

pure knowledge, the right judgment, the living faith, begins in the power and demonstration of the Spirit; and these are its limits, out of flesh, out of man, out of his will, out of his wisdom, out of the compass of his comprehension. And he that passeth not these bounds, never meets with the life, power, and virtue of truth. He may meet with a body of notions and formed knowledge, wherein he may tell of the fall of man, and restoration by Christ, and very exactly, according to a literal description; but the life, the true knowledge, the powerful virtue is another thing, and is met with in another country, whither man cannot travel; but as he is stripped of himself, and new formed, made and brought forth in another.

Oh! therefore, ye that desire after the Lord (that would be his, that would feel him yours, that would know his truth in the life and power of it) wait for the demonstrations of his Spirit; learn to distinguish inwardly, between his teachings from his Spirit, and the teachings of another spirit from the letter. For it is so indeed: that other spirit would have taught Christ so; and he will teach any else so, that will hearken to him. Now he that is taught so, and follows such teachings, wanders from God, is not accepted with him, but follows that which leads from him, under a pretence and appearance of leading to him. And here hardness and deadness grow and increase, the soul being turned from that which is living, and alone able to give life.

Quest. But how may I do, who am weak and full of doubts and fears, to keep in the sense of truth, and to come to a certainty that I am not deceived therein?

Ans. To thee, who puttest this question in the uprightness and simplicity of thy heart, I have somewhat to say.

1. *Mind how thou wast touched, mind how thou wast reached, observe what ear was opened in thee, and breathe to the Lord to keep that ear open in thee, and the other shut.* For this I can assure thee in the truth of God, that with that ear which the Lord opened to truth (which thou feltest his Spirit unlocking in thee, and letting in truth by) I say, with that ear thou shalt never be able to let in any thing afterwards contrary to truth. But if the enemy can open the other ear, that will hear his prejudices, his jealousies, his doubts, his fears, his temptations, and let them in, to thrust out that which entered at the other ear. Now canst thou not distinguish, O poor soul (a little to help thee) between that which brought some sense of truth into thee, and that which riseth in thee against truth? Oh! fear before the Lord! oh! watch, and pray, that when the tempter comes, thou enter not with him into the temptation, and so lose thy union and growth in that which is invaluable.

2. *Keep thine eye and heart upon the preciousness of what thou feltest.* Oh! remember, how fresh, how warm, how living it was; how it reached, how it overcame, how it melted. The remembrance of this (cleaved to in the mind

mind) will be a strength against the temptations and subtil devices of the enemy.

3. *Meddle not with the things that the enemy casts into thy mind.* Consider not whether they be so or no. He that considers of a temptation (in many cases) hath let it in and is overcome already. When Eve did but hearken to what the Serpent said, how soon was she lost and gone? The enemy many times brings temptations beyond the state, capacity and ability of the soul, to determine. These things, at present, are too high for thee. Thou hast not yet received a proportion of life from God to determine them by; and if thou run beyond thy measure, and determine things in thy mind, which as yet are beyond thy reach, thou must needs run into the snare.

4. *The present determining of these things, would not be of so great advantage to thee, as thou mayest apprehend.* Why so? Because the enemy hath many temptations and devices of the same kind (as well as of other kinds) which he would bring one after another. And when he brings a second, a third, &c. that which engaged thee to consider of the first, would engage thee also to consider of the rest. And if thou couldest find one answered, and not the other, that would appear to thee as so much the more weighty, and thou wouldst hardly be able to escape consenting to the tempter therein. Therefore the way is to keep out of him, in the upright sense of what the Lord wrought in thee; for so far he is with thee, and abiding there, thou art out of the enemy's reach. But being drawn by the enemy to consider of things that are out of thy reach, thou therein layest thyself open to his snares and betrayings.

5. *Mind what was forbidden thee, or required of thee in that time, when thou feltest the warmth from God.* For there is then an heavenly voice, and an heavenly vision most commonly in the heart, though the enemy turns the mind, as much as may be, from heeding it. There is then oftentimes somewhat of the worldly nature and course discovered, or somewhat of God's will made manifest; somewhat that thou dost (or hast done) which then thou seeest to be not of the Father, but of the world; and somewhat perhaps of the Father, which thou knowest thou oughtest to become subject to, but thou art afraid of the cross, or shame, or wouldst fain have some more clearness first. Oh! call this to mind afterwards; and if ever thou wouldst receive life, and come into union with God's truth, and receive his Spirit and power, and be established therein; become obedient to the heavenly vision! Consult not with flesh and blood, but enter into the obedience of that very thing, which was forbid or required, be it little or much. This is the right way, this is that thy mind should be exercised in. And if thy mind be exercised faithfully here, the Lord will strengthen thee against the tempter, when he comes with his temptations and subtil objections. But if thou falter here, and become unfaithful in the little, thou art not like to meet with more, no nor with the preservation of the Lord in that little. And indeed this is the cause of the miscarriage of many,

many, because they received not that little which was made manifest, in the love of it; but had pleasure in the unrighteousness, and so lingered in pleasing the spirit of the world, both in themselves, and others, when they were called by the Lord to quit it and travel out of it.

6. *Wait for the renewings of life and sense in thee from God*; wait for another visit, wait for another touch and demonstration of his Spirit. Where didst thou meet with it? Go thither again, wait there again, and look up to the Lord to stay thy spirit till he appear again.

But, oh! take heed, that before the light arise again, before the life stir again, thou be not gone (by hearkening to temptations) into an incapacity of knowing or receiving it. For this is the way of the Lord, the experienced way: after him (after the touches of his truth) comes the tempter with his reasonings, deceits, likenesses, &c. Now the Lord is trying thee, how thy heart will stick to him: and if thou come off from the temptation, if thou stand clear of the enemy, the Lord will appear to thee again; strengthen thee, comfort thee, open more to thee, lead thee further in the way of life, and nearer to the power and purity thereof: but if thou draw back from that, wherein the Lord began to work, the Lord's soul hath no pleasure to appear any further to thee, or work any further in thee.

And one thing I will tell thee. If thou let not in the enemy's temptations, but abide (under the clouds, under the storms, under the tempests, under the confused reasonings, fears, doubts, and troubles) looking towards the Lord, waiting for him, and not making a league with the enemy against him in the mean time, the Lord will certainly appear; and when he doth appear, thou shalt find one of these two effects.

Either the power of the enemy's objections, or temptations, will be so broken, as thou shalt not then heed them; or they will be so answered by the appearance and light of the Spirit of the Lord, as thou shalt be satisfied about them. Now which of these is the better for thee, the Lord God knows, and that thou shalt be sure to receive from him in that hour; neither will he leave thee, but secretly support thee in the mean time; thy eye and mind being towards him.

The light and power of the Lord, when it ariseth, scatters and breaks that into pieces in the mind, which was very powerful before; so as the soul doth not now so much as mind the considering or knowing of that, which the enemy had made it believe was so necessary for it to know. For mark; that which causeth me to grow, is the feeling of life, the sense of the Lord's presence and power with me, the living knowledge, the knowledge which quickens, and gives life. Now, when the life springs, when the light shines, when the Lord in the power and precious visitations of his truth, reacheth to my heart, this is present with me. Then what matter I those objections and prejudices, which the enemy casts into my mind? Nay, I cannot heed them, being taken up with another thing of a deeper nature. Thus have I often found it by experience; all that troubled me,
and

and that I doubted of, vanishing in a moment; that being present with me, and prevailing in me, which puts an end to all thoughts, reasonings, and disputes.

Again, it pleaseth the Lord at other times (when he seeth good) to open the mind, and let it into the sight of those things (it waiting upon him, and letting them alone his season) which of itself it could never have waded through. Thus also have I seen the objections, and stumbling-blocks concerning this precious people (who are of God, as the first fruits of his powerful visitation after the apostasy); concerning their principle, way, doctrine, practices, &c. opened unto me in the clear light of God, and in the holy demonstrations of his Spirit; insomuch as I have manifestly seen, and been fully satisfied, that what was objected in my own heart, and is objected to in the hearts of others, hath been from the subtil accuser of the brethren, who beareth false witness against them, and would draw as many as he can to partake in his false testimony, and so also to become false witnesses against God, his truth and people. Therefore beware, all ye that desire after the Lord, and would meet with the rest and satisfaction of your souls in him, how ye be prejudiced against that, whereby God worketh in others, and whereby he hath appointed to work in you, and all whom he worketh in. For he hath sent his Son to give life, and he will not give life by another. And he hath appointed his Son shall be received as a principle, as a seed of life, though as little as a grain of mustard-seed; yet thus must he be received; and in this his low appearance hath he the presence of God with him, and his power and authority; and what he, this little seed (though ever so little) requires, teaches, forbids, &c. must be observed. But there is none upon the earth can own or submit to this, but he that becomes a child also; yea, a very little child. Man's spirit, man's wisdom, man's knowledge, man's religion, man's zeal, &c. is too big to enter here. Men are too wise, too knowing, too rich from scriptures and experiences to submit to this; as the Scribes and Pharisees were to submit to Christ's appearance, doctrines, and preachings, when he appeared among them in that body of flesh. Therefore come into the true feeling, out of the dead knowledge into the living sense, where life, power, righteousness, yea, the peace and joy of the kingdom, is tasted of, and in some measure witnessed by those, who bow down in spirit before the least or lowest name or appearance of Jesus; the lowest degree and measure of whose life is King and Lord over death for ever.

An OBJECTION against the PRINCIPLE, which in Faithfulness to GOD, and in Love to Souls, we bear witness to ; briefly answered.

Object. **M**ANY do believe, and in that belief do object against it, that it is a natural principle, and but a natural principle: and so, in its utmost improvement, could lead but to the state of Adam's nature, and not to the redemption and new life, which is in and by Jesus Christ.

Answer. I can grant that it is natural, in a sense; but not in the intended sense. It is a principle indeed of God's nature, of Christ's nature; but not of man's nature. It is that which stands a witness in man against him, when he falls and transgresses. It is a light indeed that shines in his conscience; but it was before his conscience was, and is of an higher nature. Man is earthly (with his understanding, knowledge, reason, judgment, conscience); but the light that shines in him (even in his dark, hard, unregenerate, earthly heart) is heavenly; such as his darkness cannot comprehend, though it shine in his darkness. But wouldst thou in true understanding know what it is? Feel it; come out of that darkness where it finds thee, into that light where it dwells, and then thou wilt know it indeed, and be able to judge of it better. Now I will tell thee how we know it to be the light of the new covenant. Why thus: Because we find it discover to us the new covenant, and lead us into it; yea also shew us the sins against the new covenant, and furnish us with power from God against them, and preserve us out of them. And with this demonstration indeed, our hearts are satisfied; though we could also say further, we have witnesses, both in heaven and in earth, concerning this thing, whose testimony fully concludeth it, to the full satisfaction of the soul, where it is heard and felt.

Some QUESTIONS and ANSWERS concerning the New Covenant; opening the Nature and Way of it, as it is experimentally felt in the Heart, and witnessed to in the Holy Scriptures.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the New Covenant?

Ans. It is a new agreement between God and the soul, different from that former agreement, which was between God and that people of the Jews. It is a precious glorious covenant, containing precious promises on God's part, and as easily to be obtained on the creature's part as can possibly be. It is a covenant of the eternal love of God; of life, peace, and rest to the soul; of the power of the Lord stretched out for the soul, to deliver it from Egypt; carry through the wilderness; bring into the Holy Land; giving it its proper possession and inheritance there; and maintaining it therein against all its enemies. Yea, this covenant contains very precious things, which the soul finds great need of, and rejoiceth in the sense and presence of, when they are felt flowing from the covenant into it; as writing the laws of God in the heart, putting his fear in the inward parts; yea, putting his own Spirit within, to be a fountain of life and strength there, whereby he causeth the soul to walk in his ways, and preserveth it from departing from him. Likewise in this covenant God becomes the teacher, who createth in the soul a capacity to learn, and causeth it to heed and profit. And in this covenant there is a forgiving of iniquity, and a remembering of sins no more, but a destroying and rooting out of that which caused to sin, and an healing of the backslidings of the soul, and a loving it freely.

Quest. 2. *How is this covenant made with the soul?*

Ans. In Christ the seed, who is all in this covenant. He is the light of it; he is the life of it; he is the power of it; he is the righteousness and sanctification of it. By coming into him, the soul comes into this covenant; by abiding in him, it abides in this covenant; and by growing up in him, it grows up in this covenant.

Quest. 3. *Is this an absolutely free covenant? or are there any terms or conditions required of the soul in it?*

Ans. It is absolutely free in its own nature. It comes from the free love of God, it contains in it the free love of God, it is freely offered to all to whom it is offered, it is freely given to all to whom it is given. Here is no price, nothing of the creature's required for it; all that is required, is the creature's receiving of it and giving up to God in it. And here, and

after this manner, many things are required of the creature, without which the creature can never come to receive the covenant, abide in it, or reap the blessings contained therein. This the scriptures abundantly testify to; as also the experiences of those who know and feel the nature and virtue of the covenant.

Quest. 4. What things are required in this covenant according to the scriptures, and according to the experiences of those that enter into it, and reap the fruits and benefits of it?

Ans. 1. This is required, that when the Lord calls, when the Lord quickens, when the Lord toucheth the heart, openeth the ear, giveth a faculty and ability of hearing, that then the Lord be hearkened diligently unto, the ear (which he hath opened) kept open to him, and that that whereby he openeth the one ear and shuts the other be kept close to, and he waited upon therein; the true ear may be more and more opened by him, and the other ear (which is apt to hearken to and let in the enemy) more and more shut. Who is there among us that hath not felt the Lord God requiring this of us? Wherein, as he hath been answered, the work of God hath gone on in us; and as he hath not been answered, the work hath gone backward, and not forward. And the scripture bears witness to the same, as *Isai. lv. 1, 2, 3.* where the free covenant is proclaimed; yet there is somewhat even there required. *Hearken diligently: come and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*

2. Repentance is required, turning from the old unclean nature and spirit, and touching it no more; but cleaving to that which hath power against it, and preserveth from it. This also is felt and witnessed to be required of God now, and was also testified to of old, as *2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.* *Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

3. Faith, believing the testimony of truth, and receiving the Spirit's baptism, is required. He that will enter into this covenant, must believe the testimony of the gospel (the record of God concerning his Son) with the faith which is of him, and must be circumcised, baptized, renewed and changed by him. Now he that doth this shall be saved, as Christ promised, *Mark xvi.*; but he with whom is the power of life and salvation did not promise that any should be saved otherwise.

4. Obedience of the gospel, subjection to Christ in the rule of his Spirit, and keeping of his commandments, is required. For as the first covenant required the obedience proper to it; so the second covenant requires the obedience proper to it. And as there was no salvation, or standing in the first covenant, without the obedience thereof; so neither in the second, without the obedience thereof. He that will enjoy the peace, the righteousness, the justification, the life, the power of this covenant, must live in the

the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, fulfil the will of the Spirit; keep to the seed, keep to the anointing, that the evil-one touch him not; that the interrupter, the slayer, the destroyer of life in the heart, have not power over him, as he hath over any out of the limits of this covenant. For within it are all the good, but without it the evil things, the dangers, the temptations, the snares, the death and destruction of the soul; and whoever wanders out of the covenant, cannot but meet with them, and acknowledge it to be so, if he be in the true sense. Therefore there must be a great care to abide in that which hath gathered, in that which hath quickened, in that which giveth the true sense and understanding, and keepeth out of the wrong. How tender, how free was the love of Christ to his disciples! yet he bids them abide in his love, and tells them how they should do it: *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

Quest. 5. *But how shall the soul be able to perform all these things? Are they required of it in its own strength, or doth God undertake to perform and work all in it?*

Ans. Not at all in its own strength, will, or wisdom (these are eternally shut out of this covenant); but in the strength, life, and power, which flows from God in the covenant.

Quest. 6. *How shall the soul receive this strength, life, and power?*

Ans. By embracing it as it comes, cleaving to it, panting after it, patiently mourning and waiting for it. (The vision of good will come to that soul in the Lord's season, and will not tarry). By not despising the little, and looking after more before the little be received, but thankfully entertaining the beginnings of life, the beginnings of the holy instructions, the first drawings from off the spirit and nature of this world, in whatever it be. He that disputes not concerning the thing, but receives it just as it appears, in a simplicity and uprightness, watching thereto, he shall be blessed of the Lord, and meet with the desire of his soul in the Lord's season, when the Lord hath fitted and prepared his heart for it. Now this is so little and strait a door, so poor and low a beginning, as the wisdom of man can never enter at it; and if there should be a little entrance in the overcoming power of life, yet that wisdom will drive the soul back again presently. Let me know the doctrine first, saith the wise man; I will understand the doctrine thoroughly before I will change my present way. No, saith Christ, *He that doth his will shall know of the doctrine.* Thou shalt know a little, which will reach to thy heart. There thou must begin; and being faithful there, thou shalt know further of the doctrine; but being unfaithful there, thou mayest be stumbled and prejudiced against the doctrine, but never be able to know it. Oh! the mystery of life! Oh! the hidden path thereof, which none can learn but those whom the Father teacheth! But many think to learn in that, which ever was, and ever will be, shut out. If Christ would lay his doctrine before them, and make it good

to-

to their understanding, they would receive it. No, no; they must bow to Christ, to his name, to his power, to his will, to his way of manifesting his truth; he will not bow to theirs.

Quest. 7. What are the sins against this covenant, and what effects have they?

Ans. The sins against this covenant are chiefly unbelief in the power, and disobedience to the power, which are of a deeper nature than the sins against the first covenant, and have more dangerous effects. The refusing of this covenant is more dangerous than the refusing the covenant of Moses. And the breaking of this covenant; to wit, the starting back from God (through an heart of unbelief) here, is more dangerous than the breaking of the first covenant.

Quest. 8. Why can this covenant be broken? Hath not God undertaken all in it?

Ans. It is an agreement between God and the soul, wherein things are required of the soul, through the life and strength which flows from the covenant. And the soul may hearken to the enemy, and not to the Lord; may walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit; may lust after high knowledge, and hidden things of the kingdom, as they of old did after prying into the ark; may draw back from the Lord in those respects wherein it had given up unto him, &c. Now these, and such-like, are breaches of the covenant; or at least such sins against it as draw down judgments upon the soul at present, and at last utter casting off, unless the soul be brought back by the judgments into the agreement again with the Lord in truth and uprightness. It is true, the Lord doth all in the covenant according to his good pleasure; but withal, he hath appointed a way of his working out the life and happiness of the soul, to which it is his good pleasure to keep. And his way is Christ, his seed. Hence all the love, mercy, care, and tenderness of God flows. Hither is the soul to come for it; and here the soul is to abide, that it may enjoy and possess it. But if the enemy can by any means draw the soul out from hence, he draws it from its life and strength, and from the sweet blessings and influences of the holy and free covenant. Now the Lord hath not given power to the enemy to force from hence; but he gives power to the soul to abide with him here; and in the hour of distress, if it cry to him, he helps the helpless, and lifts up a standard against the enemy.

Now all that desire the sweetness of this covenant, the life, the virtue, the blessings of it, oh! wait to feel and receive somewhat from God, and in that to fear before him, and walk worthy of him, and not to grieve or provoke his Spirit. For he hath the power of life and death in his hand, and whom he will he may have sufficient cause against, to turn from and cut off when he pleaseth; and whom he will he may extend mercy to, as far and as long as he pleaseth; for it is his own, and he may do what he will with it. Only know this, God is love; God is bowels, infinite bowels; yea,

yea, his tenderneſs is beyond imagination or comprehension, and he hates putting away. The poor mourning ſouls that cry unto him, feeling their need of him, and gasping after him, he cannot caſt off; no, nor any that come unto him in the truth of their hearts: but the wiſe, the confident, the conceited, from their apprehenſions of ſcriptures, that think themſelves ſafe by virtue of the covenant, and yet are enemies in their minds to the light of the covenant, theſe are out of the thing at preſent (in their own imaginings and conceivings), and are in the moſt danger of any I know. The Lord in mercy cauſe his light to ſhine, his life to ariſe, his power to be manifeſt, and thereby lead into, and preſerve in, his everlaſting covenant, according to his good pleaſure. *Amen.*

A QUESTION or Two, relating to ELECTION, answered.

Queſt. 1. **H**OW may a man make his calling and election ſure?

Answer. By making Chriſt ſure to him, in whom the calling and election is; for the Lord chuſeth only in him, and refuseth or reprobateh only out of him.

Queſt. 2. *How may I make Chriſt ſure to me?*

Anſw. By receiving him, giving up to him, parting with all for him, and waiting upon him in the way and path of life, till I feel the power of that broken in me which would ſeparate from him. For what danger is there then, when the ſoul is naturally become the Lord's, rooted in his love, circumciſed in heart to love the Lord above all, even with the whole heart and ſoul? Certainly the love of the Lord cannot but flow in great ſtrength to that ſoul, and what can come between? But now, while there is ſomewhat ungiven up, ſomewhat yet ſtanding, in which the enemy hath a part, and by which he may enter, the ſtate of that ſoul is not fully ſure; but there may be a going back from the ſaving life into that wherein is the perdition and deſtruction of the ſoul; and whoever goes thither, meets with perdition and deſtruction, ſo far as he travels that way. For in the path of death there is death, which is met with by all that enter into, and walk therein; as in the path of life there is life. God is no reſpecter of perſons; but he is a reſpecter of his ſeed, and of his eternal covenant of life, which ſtands firm in his ſeed for ever. Here is life for every ſoul that feels the drawings of the Father, and comes to his Son for life, and abides in him; and there is death for every ſoul that comes not to this, and departs from this through the heart of unbelief. So the way of God is eternal and immutable; he cannot deny himſelf. He that believeth in the Son, hath life; he that believeth not, is in the death and condemnation which belongs to the unbelief. Now wouldſt thou know thy election, wait to know
and

336 *A Question or two relating to Election answered.*

and distinguish between Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael, in thyself; for they were outward figures, and allegories of somewhat inward. Feel Esau, the profane one; Ishmael, the scoffer at the wisdom, way, and seed of God: feel, I say, these (that are cast off by God) cast out of thee; and then feel Isaac, the seed of the promise; Jacob, the plain birth of life, raised up in thee, living in thee, and thou in it. And then thou feelest the election, and art in the election. And as his seed is sure to thee, and thy union with it, and standing and abiding in it sure, so thy election is sure. Election is a deep mystery, and none can read the scriptures about it (which indeed are hard to be understood, but easy to be wrested) but they that understand the thing; that can read in the seed, life, power, and openings of the Spirit of the Lord, they read things as they are; but other men only read things as they apprehend and conceive them to be. So that the knowledge that God hath given his people is above all the knowledge that can be searched out, gathered, or comprehended by all the men upon the earth; whereby they know God better, the things of God better, the words and scriptures of truth better, than they themselves otherwise (or any else) could possibly attain to.

A QUESTION answered concerning the Ground of Mens misunderstanding and wresting of Scriptures.

Quest. **W**HAT is the ground of mens misunderstanding and wresting of scriptures?

Ans. 1. Want of acquaintance with God's Spirit, and the right way of waiting upon him to receive the understanding of them. For though men may go thus far, as to know and confess that the Spirit of the Lord is the only revealer of the things of God, and the alone right interpreter of his own words; yet that man, who thus confesseth, may not certainly and distinctly know the Spirit of the Lord, and when he receiveth the interpretation of a scripture from him, or when from his understanding, or a spirit that is contrary to him. For there is another spirit near man, whose nature, work, and delight is to cause man to misunderstand, and mis-walk by the very scriptures; and will bring things as warmly, and (as it were) clearly to him, as he can from scriptures, purposely to deceive and mislead him. Now he that hugs and receives every thing that thus riseth in him, easily runs into, and is surely caught in the snare of the enemy. Therefore a man must watch, and wait, and fear, and pray that he may distinguish between the nature and voices of spirits in himself, that so he may know (in the light of the Lord) when the Lord speaks, and also when the mysterious spirit of deceit strives to speak like the Lord. Now man cannot

cannot know this of himself; but as he is taught by the Lord, at the very time when the snare comes: and he must not determine hastily; but wait to feel that wherein the Lord appears and speaks to him, and wherein the enemy cannot speak. Thus feeling the birth of life in his heart, the seed which is of the Father, which hath an ear that knows the voice of the Shepherd, and sinking into this, and listening in this (out of his own thoughts, reasonings, and whole course of his own wisdom), he also hath his ear opened to hear the true voice, and findeth ability here to distinguish it from the voice of the stranger, let him counterfeit ever so deceitfully. For the eye of the Lord, the eye of truth, the eye of life, the eye of the Spirit, pierce-eth through, and discovereth all deceits to the soul that feareth before him, diligently waiteth upon him in his seed, and desireth to walk faithfully therein.

2. Want of acquaintance with God's truth in the love, life, and power of it. For he that knows truth, that hath received from God the thing the scriptures speak of, how easy is it to him to understand the words that speak of that thing? But he who hath the knowledge of the thing but from the words, how easy is it for him to misunderstand the words? As for instance: he whom God hath justified, he who hath received the righteousness of the Son, he who daily feeleth the blood of sprinkling, &c. how easy and natural is it unto him to understand the words of scripture, which speak of these things? But he that hath not received this, nor thus knoweth the thing, how easy is it for him to misunderstand the words; and so, from misunderstanding of the words, to set up another righteousness for the righteousness of Christ, than that which the Spirit of God intendeth in the scriptures?

3. The opinions, apprehensions, ways, and practices of men, which they have taken up in the dark, and in which their minds are engaged, are a great lett in their way from the right understanding of scriptures, or the testimony of truth from others according to the scriptures. For there hath been a cloudy and dark day, or a great night of darkness upon the earth, wherein the light (which leadeth to the soul's rest) hath not shined clearly in mens spirits; and so in this cloudy darkness men have wandered from mountain to hill, seeking their resting-place. Now some have fixed and pitched on one mountain, some on another; some on one hill, some on another, saying, here is the resting-place. So when the Spirit of the Lord comes and cries, *Depart ye, depart ye; this is not your resting-place, for it is polluted*; they cannot hear. Why so? Because they have already believed otherwise, and in that belief took it up for their rest; and so cannot rightly understand or believe those scriptures, or those living testimonies from the Spirit of the Lord, which declare it not to be so; but are ready to wrest the one, and reproach the other.

Some QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, and QUERIES,
concerning DECEIT and DECEIVERS; as what they
are, what discovers them, how Man may come out
of them, and be preserved from them, &c.

IN the truth there is no deceit; and they that are in the truth, are out of the deceit; and abiding there, are out of the reach of deceivers: but they that are out of the truth, are in the deceit already, and are liable daily more and more both to be further deceived, and to help to deceive others.

Quest. 1. *What is deceit, and who are deceivers?*

Ans. That which appeareth like truth, but is not; that is deceit: and they which are in a form of godliness, but are without the Spirit, life, and power of it, they are deceivers.

Quest. 2. *Who are most liable to deceit?*

Ans. The simple, the heedless, the careless, the credulous; those that wait not upon the Lord in the light, power, and demonstration of his Spirit, to try things; these (with good words and fair speeches, and appearances of things) are easily led aside from the truth itself into some likeness or resemblance of it.

Quest. 3. *Which is the time of deceit?*

Ans. The night; the cloudy, the dark time, when the enemy hath raised his fogs and mists in the minds of men, then is his time of deceiving their hearts.

Quest. 4. *Is it now night or day?*

Ans. It is night with some, day with others. Where the light is arisen, there it is day; where the darkness covereth and possesseth the minds of men, there it is night.

Quest. 5. *How may a man know whether it be night or day with him?*

Ans. By waiting to feel somewhat of the life of God arising in him, by turning and hearkening to his witness. That will faithfully discover how it is with him, and where he is.

Quest. 6. *How may a man come out of the darkness of the night into the light and brightness of the day?*

Ans. By joining to the first glimmerings and breakings forth thereof upon him. The least light of truth hath the same nature, virtue, and properties with the greatest. Though not the same in degree, yet the same in kind; and he that will come to the greatest, must begin with the least. Light makes manifest; the day discovers both the things of the night and
of

of the day. Hast thou any discovery of either kind? Either of that which is good, or of that which is evil? Either of that which is of the worldly nature and the evil one, or of that which is of the heavenly nature and the Holy One? Join in immediately in the virtue, strength, and power of that which makes the discovery, and thy spirit therein will find an entrance into the light of the day; and going on faithfully thus, it will daily more and more break in upon thee, even until it hath gathered thy spirit out of the blackness, darkness, and deceit of the night, into the beauty, brightness, and truth of the day.

Quest. 7. How may a man be preserved from deceit and deceivers?

Answ. By abiding in that which discovers them to him, and preserveth out of them; by dwelling in that light, in that life, in that power, in that truth, into which they cannot enter: by keeping to, and in, the elect of God, which never was deceived, nor can be deceived: for it is of God, it is his seed, of his nature, in which the wicked one (the deceiver) finds nothing, hath nothing in him to enter at; and he that abides in him, is safe in him. But he that goes forth out of the life, out of the light, out of the seed, out of the power which preserves, out of the holy anointing, which keeps the eye open, he easily runs into, and is entangled in the deceivableness of unrighteousness, judging it (for want of a true discerning) righteousness; and then having judged that to be righteousness which is in its own nature but unrighteousness, he must needs also judge that which is the true righteousness to be but unrighteousness; and then (having passed this judgment in himself) he grows wise, confident, and strong in his deceit, both believing himself, and also endeavouring to convince and persuade others, that it is the truth. Oh! who knoweth the security of the little-ones of God, who have a being and standing in his truth! The arm of his power is stretched round about them, and he is a defence and strength unto them against all that would break in upon them (to make a prey of their life, or to shake their standing in his truth), either inwardly or outwardly. Oh! bless his name, sing high praises to him, ye that feel it, over all deceit or deceivables, over all the devices of the dark spirit, which entangleth others, and would also entangle you, but that his goodness, mercy, tender love, and powerful arm is stretched out over you. So to him be the praise, and the bowings of that soul, which feels his powerful and merciful preservation, for ever and ever.

Now it is in my heart to add four queries, which, rightly weighed and resolved, in and according to truth, may further open mens minds into the true sense and right understanding of this thing.

Query 1. Have not the last days, the perilous times (the times foretold of by Christ and his apostles) been a long while upon the earth, wherein iniquity hath abounded, and the love of many waxed cold, wherein men have been lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, &c.? Hath there not been a long night of darkness, wherein these things (with many other fruits and effects of the night)

night) have hid and covered themselves almost in all sorts of professors of Christianity, under a form of godliness?

Query 2. *Is not their time expiring already, and in some degree expired? Was it not to have an end when the light and power of truth, which at first kept it back, did spring and arise again?*

Query 3. *Is not the day arisen? Is not the darkness already past? And doth not the true light now shine (and the true power of life now appear) in many vessels? Let the souls, that desire to know the truth of this, wait to feel that which is of God answer in them.*

Query 4. *Where are the deceivers, and where is the deceit? Is it among those that have embraced the light of life? or among those who abide in their old darkness, and whose eyes are not yet opened to see the light and beauty of the day, which is arisen in the hearts of those that are quickened and raised by the power of the Lord?*

That the Way of LIFE and SALVATION is freely held forth by GOD to all; and there is nothing in him to lett, stop, or discourage any Man from receiving his TRUTH, and giving up to him in the Faith and Obedience of it, but very much to invite and encourage.

IT hath pleased the Lord, who is over all, and good unto all, to provide a remedy for the sin and transgression of the creature. For as sin hath abounded unto death, so he hath caused righteousness to abound unto life; yea, the free gift, which is as large and universal as ever sin was, hath more power in it to save, than sin hath to destroy. And there is no ground of discouragement for any (who hath not outlived the day of his visitation, and so the offer of mercy is over as to him) in reference to God; though the enemy of the soul strives to raise up many discouragements and objections in the minds of many, to keep them from hoping in the Lord, and from giving up to his truth, which saveth all that receive it, and abide in it. Now it is in my heart at this time, from a true sense, to signify somewhat concerning the nature of the Lord (and his real desire to save even those that perish), which may conduce towards the removing of objections and letts of this nature out of the minds of men.

1. God is sweetness, meekness, gentleness, tenderness, abounding in mercy and loving-kindness, pitying the miserable, and naturally holding forth an helping hand towards them: yea, he is universally thus. There is not one miserable soul, not one perishing creature upon the face of the earth,

earth, but as he hath wisdom and power to help it, so he hath tender bowels, and an heart thereunto. And it is not for want of somewhat to be done on his part, that souls perish, but the failing always was, and still is, on the creature's part.

2. God loveth all his creatures, and cannot but be good to them. He is outwardly good, he is inwardly good to them all. He can do nothing against any one of them, but what stands with his love and mercy. He doth not forget himself; he doth not lose his nature in the manifesting of his righteousness, wrath, and severity against sin and sinners.

3. He desires not the death of a sinner, nay, not of the wicked. How mercifully did he walk with the Jews in the first covenant? Did he ever desire their miscarriages, and the miseries which came upon them thereby? Nay, did he not desire their good, and their obedient walking with him therein for their good? *Oh!* (said he) *that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, &c.* Deut. v. 29. How mercifully doth he walk with all in the second covenant, that are in any measure drawn within the limits and compass thereof! He is a Saviour, that is his nature; and he seeketh the salvation of his creatures with his whole heart, and with all his soul. And when he bringeth any to repentance, there is joy in his bosom: and when the enemy breaketh in upon any of his, or by any subtilty draweth them into that which destroyeth, his pure tender Spirit is grieved therewith, and mourneth because of it. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,* (said his true living image with tears) *how often would I have gathered thee!*

4. He would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. God sends his truth, his powerful truth, to save; and he shuts not any one out of it; but seeks (in the way he hath appointed) to gather all into it, that they might be saved by it.

5. He is very patient and long-suffering, waits long, tries long, invites often, touches often, draws often: yea, the very vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, there is much patience and long-suffering exercised towards them, before the Lord can cast them off, and give them up utterly to destruction. For mark, destruction is not his work or delight; it is the work of a spirit and nature contrary to his. *I came not* (saith Christ) *to destroy mens lives, but to save; to give life to them.* And this is the proper end of God in every ministration: his end is not death, destruction, increasing of the condemnation of the creature, &c. but to bring it to life thereby, out of that which leadeth into the condemnation and destruction. Did he not for this end bear with the old world? Was not this the end of Noah's preaching to them and warning of them? Did he not for this end bear with the Jews in Egypt, in the wilderness, in Canaan, &c.? Is not this the proper intent of the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God, that it should lead to repentance? (*Rom. ii. 4.*) and repentance leads to mercy, remission, and life.

6. The

6. The sacrifice of Christ had relation to all men. He was sent out of God's universal love to mankind, to the whole world; and was made a propitiation by God for the sins of the whole world.

7. There is no man perisheth for want of power; for there is power in the free gift which comes upon all. There is power in it to quicken, to give faith, to preserve in the faith, to do all that is to be done in the soul; and it doth all every-where, as it findeth place and entertainment in the soul. But man refuseth, man loveth the darkness, hateth the light, shutteth his eyes against it, withdraweth his heart from it, and so beateth back the purpose and counsel of God's love and good-will towards him. For as the Jews outwardly, in that outward covenant, almost always rebelled, resisted, and brought wrath upon themselves, to the grief of God's heart and of his holy prophets; so do men in reference to the inward covenant (in that nature and spirit) exceedingly provoking the Lord, until his Spirit (in its holy jealousy and indignation) turn from them, and give them up to hardness, senselessness, and impenitency, which sealeth up to destruction. But as Israel, in that first covenant, could never justly lay the cause of their destruction on God, but God did most justly lay it on them (*O Israel! thy destruction is of thyself, but in me is thy help*); so neither can any blame the Lord, who perish from, and fall short of, the virtue of the second covenant: for he faileth not in doing his part therein, no more than he did fail in the first. But man turneth from the power which saves, from the light which makes manifest, from the life which quickens; and this is his condemnation, and the cause of his perishing: so that God will be just and clear of the blood of all men, and the blood of them that perish will lie upon their own heads. Had there not been somewhat near every man, which had more power in it than sin had, they might have had some plea before the Lord; but the presence of this, the power of this, the working of this in every heart, more or less, leaves all men without excuse, and clears the free-giver and his free gift in the ballance of righteousness. For this gift of his is faithful to every man upon the face of the earth, never consenting to his iniquities and transgressions in any kind, but still testifying against them as the Lord pleaseth to open its mouth. But who hath believed its report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Yet greater will the condemnation be upon them, upon whom the Lord hath more abundantly shined; and many will have a plea in respect of them, which the Lord will hear and consider, and so they shall not enter into that depth of judgment and condemnation, which will light on such as have resisted the light and power of life, in its more glorious and bright appearances and strivings with them; even as Christ said, *It shall be easier for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem.*

Therefore, O all men upon the earth, know the day of your visitation! Make peace with the Lord, O transgressors! lay hold on his strength, that
ye

ye may make peace with him. Believe not the liar, who would put you out of hope, but believe the voice of his love and tender Spirit. Turn in, listen after him, watch if he do not call, mind if he do not draw; and do not say, I want power; but wait in humility, meekness and fear, until his power arise. Bear his judgments, wait upon him in the way of his judgments. Do not fly from him because thereof; for therein is the mercy, life and salvation. Be not hasty, but wait long, believe long, hope long, feel the patience of the Lamb, learn the mysterious path of life from the inward teacher, that ye may certainly know it, and find your feet guided by his Spirit into it.

Is not the voice gone forth from him that is true? *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, &c. and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* And is not he near who causeth the thirst, and giveth the will? Whom hath the Lord excluded? Why should any man exclude himself? The call is universal, the way is set open to all. That is at hand which hath life and power in it, and is ready to work in all. This commandment hath it received of its Father; and it is faithful which hath received it: and all that come to the Father here, in this gathering of life, the Father is ready to receive. Thy soul, O man! is the Lord's. It is very precious in his eye: he seeks to save it, and hath sent somewhat into thy heart to gather thee from that which would destroy it. And this which he hath sent, hath in it of the Father's love, of the Father's mercy, of the Father's power, of the Father's light, of the Father's life, of the Father's wisdom, righteousness, &c. and will gather thee out of the world into the Father's nature and Spirit, if thou wilt hearken to him with the ear which he will create in thee, and receive him with the heart which he will give thee: yea, he will help thee to turn from and forsake thy own wickedness, and the wicked spirit, and to turn towards him who is life, righteousness, and peace to the soul, that is gathered unto him; do but give up thyself (in the faith and obedience which he is creating in thee) in the way of his quickening and renewing life.

Some QUESTIONS answered concerning the SPIRIT
of CHRIST, and the Spirit of the SCRIBES and
PHARISEES.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT kind of spirit was the spirit of the scribes and pharisees?

Ans. A strict, zealous, righteous spirit, according to their understanding and apprehensions of the letter. They fasted much, they prayed much, they

they gave alms, they were great contenders for the circumcision and ordinances of Moses.

Quest. 2. What kind of spirit was the Spirit of Christ?

Ans. A righteous, strict, and zealous Spirit, according to the power of the endless life. He was in that from which the righteousness of the law came, and which brought it forth and fulfilled it in his vessel.

Quest. 3. What did the scribes and pharisees judge of Christ according to their apprehensions and understanding of the letter?

Ans. They judged him a sinner and transgressor of the law of Moses, a loose person, an eater, a drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners; one who taught not his disciples to fast and pray, but rather to break the law of God, and transgress the sabbath; yea, one who was a blasphemer, and a deceiver of people, &c.

Quest. 4. How came the scribes and pharisees thus to judge of Christ?

Ans. Because they were in that spirit, nature and mind, which giveth wrong judgment. For it is not a gathered knowledge from the letter, which makes able to judge of spirits, and about the things of God; but a receiving and being born of the Spirit. For from the Spirit alone is the right understanding of the letter, which the Spirit hath to give, and giveth to the true birth.

Quest. 5. What did Christ judge of the scribes and pharisees according to his knowledge of them from the Spirit and power of life?

Ans. That they were hypocrites, painted-walls, and sepulchres, which made a fair shew in the flesh, but were not of nor in the truth.

Quest. 6. Is the spirit of the scribes and pharisees to be found now in the world?

Ans. There is nothing new under the sun. The spirit of wickedness and deceit is always the same, in all ages and generations; and the Spirit of holiness and truth is the same also. So that Cain, Ishmael, Esau, the scoffer and persecuter of the prophets (of Christ's apostles and holy martyrs) are to be found in every age (the same in Spirit and nature with them): and so are Abel, Enoch, Isaac, Jacob, &c.

Quest. 7. Where is the spirit of the scribes and pharisees now to be found?

Ans. They in all professions (gatherings and walkings) that are strict, zealous, and righteous, according to their own understandings and apprehensions of the letter, and not according to the Spirit and power of the endless life, they are of and in that spirit?

Quest. 8. How may a man come out of the Spirit of the scribes and pharisees, and into the Spirit of Christ?

Ans. By coming to the power of the endless life wherein Christ's ministry is, wherein his Spirit is felt and ministereth. This shuts out all the deceits and devices of that spirit which lieth in wait to deceive. He may entangle the mind about the letter, about the understanding of scriptures, and practices and ordinances there: but he that begins in the Spirit (in the power

power of life, in the living demonstration of truth) is out of his compass; and there abiding, groweth up and remaineth out of his reach.

Quest. 9. *How may a man come to the power of the endless life?*

Answ. By waiting to feel it. There is somewhat of God near every man, which, his spirit retiring and waiting on the Lord, the Lord will give him to feel in the seasons of his good pleasure. For it is near man, not as a talent always to lie dead and buried, but to work in him, and bring him out of his own sinful corrupt nature into its holy pure nature.

Quest. 10. *How may a man feel and know the power of this life?*

Answ. By its nature, properties, manner, and end of working in the heart. It enlightens the soul, it quickens to God, it draws the heart from that which is manifestly and sensibly evil without dispute, it opens the eye to see and discern that which is holy and good, inflaming the mind with desires after it. Now this is the appearance of the Holy One, who thus appears and begins to work, to draw the mind from that which is sinful and destroyeth, to that which is holy and saveth. Happy, oh! happy is he who thus feels the drawing, quickening Spirit, and in faithfulness gives up thereto! for he (by the Spirit and power of life) shall feel Cain, the sacrificer according to the flesh, Ishmael the seed of Abraham after the flesh, Esau the first birth, whose mind is in the earth: he shall feel these, I say, cast out; and Abel the righteous seed, who lives and sacrifices in the true faith; Isaac the seed of promise, Jacob the wrestler with God, in the power and strength of his own Spirit, with the tears and supplications which are from his own life; he shall feel (I say) this nature, birth, and Spirit raised in him, and his soul in it living to God, and increasing in union and fellowship with him.

Some QUESTIONS answered concerning BLASPHEMY and BLASPHEMERS.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is blasphemy?

Answ. It is the reproaching or speaking ill of the truths or name of God, in any of their appearances, or of them whom he hath chosen to bear his name, or hold forth his truth. To reproach the name or truths of God, as they have been held forth in former ages, or as they are held forth in this age; or to speak evil of the instrument he then chose, or now chuseth and maketh use of to hold them forth; this is blasphemy: and the Lord will not hold him guiltless who so doth, whatsoever he be.

Quest 2. *In which respect are men most liable to blasphemy? Are they aptest to reproach and speak evil of God's truths, as they have been held forth in former*

ages, and the instruments by which God then beld them forth? or are they apter to reproach and speak evil of the truths of God, as they are beld forth in their age, and the instruments and ministers who then beld them forth?

Answ. Men are not so liable to blaspheme the truths (or name) of God, as formerly held forth, or the messengers and ministers of former ages, as the present truth and the present ministry.

Quest. 3. How cometh that about, or why is it so?

Answ. Because the truths of former ages, and the ministry therein, have wrought through the deceit and opposition, which withstood them in their day, and have left a good savour behind them; so that it would be hard and disadvantageous to the evil spirit to endeavour to bring a reproach over them. If men should go about to revile Moses or the prophets of old, Christ or his apostles, who would give an ear to them? Surely very few, if any. But to cry up these and their doctrine, and to endeavour to make the present dispensation of truth appear to men, as if it were different from, and contrary to these (of another nature, of another spirit, tending to other ends, and towards the producing of other effects); this is a very subtil device, and an advantageous way of opposing the present truth and ministry with; and this way the enemy hath taken all along. Moses in his day had enemies and resisters, but after his death we never hear him spoken against; but those that withstood the prophets in after-ages, would honour the remembrance of Moses. In Christ's day they would honour both Moses and the prophets; but Christ, and his disciples and apostles, were reproached as blasphemers and deceivers. After that age, Christ and his apostles were generally acknowledged, as well as Moses and the prophets; but yet they that were in the same Spirit, in the same life, in the same nature, have afterwards still been persecuted and opposed by the present age.

Quest. 4. Who are the great blasphemers in every age?

Answ. They which profess truth, but are not in the power and life of that which they profess; and among these, those especially who have had any taste of the power; for if these turn from the power, which it pleased God to give them some taste of, they are given up by God to delusion, devilishness, subtilty, and enmity, above all others. For as the blasphemy (which I am speaking of) is above truth and the name of Christ, so it is chiefly to be found among those who pretend to his name. Those that have the outward name, knowledge, and talk about the name, about Christ, about the heavenly things; these blaspheme and reproach those who have and are in the thing itself, who dwell in heaven, and worship in the heavenly place, even in the true tabernacle which God hath pitched, and not man. These bring their knowledge, wisdom, scriptures, experiences, observations, and all that ever they can reap and rend, against the present power and life of truth.

Quest.

Quest. 5. *How come men, who pretend to truth, and to seek after it, to run into this grievous and dangerous blasphemy?*

Ans. By reason of their not being in that, which demonstrateth the truth in the holy power and nature thereof. They want its light and demonstration, and so understand things out of it; and in this their own misunderstanding turn against that, which should enlighten, sanctify, and preserve them. Now, not being in that (but in another thing); not being in the true Spirit, in the true light, in the true knowledge, in the true sense and understanding, they must needs err and misjudge; and the greater their knowledge, ability, wisdom, and zeal is, the more desperate and dangerous is their path of error, both to themselves and others. Who erred so dangerously in that day, as the Scribes and Pharisees; which by their wisdom, knowledge, and skill in the scriptures, would dispute against Christ, prove he was not (he could not be) the Messiah, according to the scriptures (bidding men search the scriptures, and see if any prophet came out of Galilee, *John vii. 52.*) judged him, who was indeed the holy one (who loved righteousness, and hated iniquity) an unholy one, a sinner and companion of sinners, a blasphemer, deceiver, &c.? And in the same spirit the stricter a man is, and the more he knows, and the more confident he is of his knowledge and skill in the scriptures, the more desperately and dangerously will he venture to oppose the appearance of the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus in this day.

Quest. 6. *How come they who have so much literal knowledge of scriptures, and have had a true sense and experience (some of them) of the things of God, to be out of that which demonstrateth the truth?*

Ans. By their turning from it, and rejecting it. The Scribes and Pharisees rejected the counsel of God, against themselves. There is but one thing can open the eyes, and the Scribes and Pharisees turned against it, believing that their eyes were opened already, by the light and knowledge which they had received from Moses. *Moses*, said they, *we know God speaks to; but as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.* And just so is it now. Oh! that ye could read, whose state it is!

Quest. 7. *Why do they turn from it and reject it?*

Ans. Because it answers not their expectations. That appearance of Christ in flesh in that day, did not answer the expectations of the Scribes and Pharisees. And this appearance of Christ in his Holy Spirit and power after the apostasy, doth not answer the expectations of many now. And so, not appearing as what they look for, as what they have expected, according to their apprehensions and understanding of the scriptures, they cannot (so standing and believing) wait, but turn from it, and turn the scriptures against it, as the Scribes and Pharisees turned the scriptures against that appearance of Christ.

Now, Oh! that men, that have any desires after truth, might not run into this kind of blasphemy, and so thereby provoke and turn that Spirit
and

348 *A Question concerning Miracles answered.*

and power of life against them, which alone is able to save them. For the Spirit and power of the Lord turneth against the other spirit, in all its devices and transformings, and against them who are joined to that spirit. And as the eye of the Lord is chiefly upon his present ministration of truth in the present age to mind that, to bless that, to appear in that; so his Spirit most turneth against that which opposeth and seeketh to overturn it. Yea, little do men know what they have lost from God, as to themselves and their own states; and what they are become in his sight, by their opposing the present dispensation and ministration of truth; even as little do many know in this day, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, in their day, what they brought upon themselves and others, whom they infected (by their false knowledge and wrong expounding and managing of the scriptures) with a prejudiced spirit against Christ.

The Lord did promise that he would become the Shepherd, and gather his sheep himself, after the cloudy and dark day. He is come to seek out, to gather, to heal, to bind up, to comfort, to preserve, &c. He is known, he is witnessed, he is received; his life, virtue, healing and saving power is felt. Let men reproach and revile it ever so much, yet it is known to be the thing, the pearl, the seed of the kingdom, &c. Yea, and he that receiveth it, and is born of it, knoweth that he is of God, and hath the true nature of life, and true language from God; which that, which knoweth God, heareth; but that which is not of God, cannot hear.

A QUESTION concerning MIRACLES answered.

Quest. **I**F this be a new dispensation of the life and power of God, even of the preaching of the everlasting gospel again after the apostasy, why is it not accompanied with outward miracles now, as formerly it was? I say outward miracles, because it is accompanied with inward miracles. For the lame (that could never set step in the path of life) do now walk; the eyes that were blind, are opened, and do now see; the ears that were deaf, have been unstopped, and do now hear; the lepers inwardly (who were all overspread with sin and corruption) have been washed, cleansed, and healed, by the pure power; yea, the dead inwardly have been quickened, raised, turned to him that lives for evermore, have received life from him, and do live in him and with him. Now these are mighty things, wonderful miracles, even the substance of the miracles which were wrought under the law, and which Christ himself wrought outwardly. For it was not the outward healing, which is salvation, life, and power chiefly aimed at therein; but to point men by that to the thing which was to work the inward; that they might take notice of it, know it, come to it, and wait upon it, to be made partakers

A Question concerning Miracles answered. 349

takers of the inward health and salvation by it. Yet seeing in that day Christ did then please to put forth his power outwardly, to point to, and witness of, the inward, why doth he not do so now?

Ans. The nature of the present dispensation doth not require it. For the present dispensation of life, is to bring men to the principle of life which is within them (which is the sum and substance of all former dispensations); and to bring them to this, there doth not need any thing of a miraculous nature outwardly; but the witness, demonstration and enlightening of the Spirit inwardly. Now when the outward law was to be received, then the Lord saw need of outward miracles to confirm it; so also in the prophets days, while that dispensation held, till towards the coming of Christ. And when Christ came, in the body prepared by the Father, it pleased the Lord to confirm (by outward visible demonstrations of his power in him) that this was he. Likewise afterwards, the apostles having the doctrine concerning that appearance to preach and testify to the world, the Lord was also pleased and saw good to confirm it by miracles. But now there is not any new doctrine to be preached. The doctrine concerning Christ is the same that it was, the very same that the apostles preached. Neither is there any need of confirming it now; for it is generally believed among professors of all sorts; as Christ's birth, preaching, living holily, dying (offering himself up as a sacrifice for sin), rising, ascending, sitting at the right hand of the Father, who doubts of these things? But under all this knowledge men hide their sins, their lusts, and corruptions, serving not the Lord (not truly fearing, believing in, and obeying him) but his enemies, and are become corrupt like unto the Heathen; being in words Christians, but as to the holy conversation and power of the endless life, as far from it as the very Heathen. Therefore hath the Lord visited the world in this state, and sent forth what he judged meet for it in this state; to wit, not a ministry to preach over that doctrine, under which the Christian world had corrupted themselves; but to point to the principle of life, wherein is the light and power to discover, lead from and wash away this corruption. And with this ministry there goeth a power, to reach the heart and raise the witness, in all that hear in fear, and in the sense and dread of God; so that the witness presently answers, and the mind is inwardly satisfied, knows the thing, and turns to it. Now this (and the effect of this) is beyond miracles, and the satisfaction or assurance which they can afford. For miracles leave a dispute in the mind (notwithstanding all the miracles Christ shewed, there was yet a dispute and dissatisfaction in the minds of many concerning him). But he that feels the thing itself in the true principle, where the demonstration and certainty of the Spirit's assurance is received; he is past dispute, and is gone a degree, in the nature of things, beyond that satisfaction which miracles can afford. He is out of that state and mind which asketh a sign, or seeketh confirmation by a sign. So that men ought to take heed how they expect or call for miracles now, as the Jews did to Christ

Christ for a sign of old; for that is not the temper of mind which this dispensation is to answer, but rather to draw men out from thence into a principle, into the new life and Spirit itself; where fuller demonstrations (of a deeper nature) are given to the soul, than outward miracles are. Feel the power that is revealed, feel the life that is made manifest, let in the light of the day which shines; this will scatter the darkness from thee, and clear up the things of the day unto thee. The pure ministration of power, the pure ministration of life, the light of the everlasting day is come. Oh! wait the opening of the eye that sees it, and be conceived and brought forth in the womb of it.

Some further QUESTIONS answered, concerning the NEW COVENANT.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT were those days, after which the New Covenant was to be made?

Answ. They were the days of the law and prophets, the days of the first covenant, the days of God's exercising and making trial of that outward people the Jews, by his outward and literal covenant. After the full expiring of those days, another covenant was to be made.

Quest. 2. What are the days wherein the new covenant is made?

Answ. They are the days of Christ, the days of his power, the days of the ministration of his Spirit.

Quest. 3. What is the house of Israel and Judah, with which this new covenant is to be made? Is it the Israel and Judah according to the flesh? The Israel and Judah according to the old covenant; or according to the new?

Answ. When the old covenant is passed away, the consideration of Israel and Judah (after the flesh) passed away also; and the new covenant is fitted for, and made with, the new Israel and Judah; so that, as the apostle said, *He is not* (now, according to this covenant) *a Jew, that is one outward; nor is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inward, &c.* The gospel breaks down the outward consideration between Jew and Gentile, and brings up another consideration in both; so that the promises and blessings are not to either in their old state, but as they are gathered into, and spring up in, the new seed.

Quest. 4. Is this covenant faultless? Doth it mend that which God found amiss in the other? Doth it keep more firmly to him than the other did? Is there no falling away from it?

Answ. Yes, it is faultless, it doth help the defects of the other. It doth keep more firmly to God. There is no falling away from it, by those with whom

whom it is fully made, and who are established in it. But in the passage and travel, there is danger to the soul which is not faithful and watchful, lest it be drawn from that which gives it right to, and entrance into, the covenant. For as the beginning is in the faith, and in the obedience; so is the continuance, growth, and progress. Thus the gospel was preached, *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved*; which believing includes not only a beginning to believe, but a going on therein, and continuing to the end. For so is the promise and word of Christ, *He that continueth to the end shall be saved*. But if any man draw back from the Lord, from his Spirit, and return into the way of death with the other spirit, the soul of the Lord will have no pleasure in him.

Object. But then this also is like the first covenant, depending upon the creature, and is defective as the other was.

Ans. No; this covenant doth not depend upon the creature: but upon God's love, mercy, and power, which hath no limits in this covenant, but may extend itself as far and as long as it pleaseth. It dependeth upon the principle of his life, upon the power of his Spirit freely dispensed to the creature; yet the creature that will reap and enjoy this, must come to it in the faith and power which is of the principle, and in the same must abide with it. For God forceth none to come, but draweth and maketh willing; neither doth he force any to stay, but persuadeth and maketh willing to stay. This is the manner of his working in the day of his power. But now, if the soul hearken to the other spirit, and his drawings, and depart from the Lord, and will not hearken and be won again, the love and pleasure of the Lord turns from it, even according to the law of this covenant. For there is a law of this covenant, according to the nature of it (according to which the Lord works) as well as there was in the other.

Now search ye the scriptures concerning this thing. Is there any promise of salvation, but upon coming to the Son; or to them that come, without abiding? Did not Christ tell his own disciples, that as they were in the vine, in his love, so they must abide there? It was the law his Father gave him, and the same law he giveth them. It is natural to man to backslide; and in his backsliding from that wherein is the life and virtue, how can he but miss of the life and virtue of it? Therefore, in this covenant, the Lord hath provided that which will heal the backslidings, which will work out all in man freely, which will powerfully preserve him, &c. But he must come to it (he must come to the Son, he must come to the waters) and he must also abide there. Yet this is not required of him to do of himself neither, according to the law and course of the old covenant; but of him in the new ability, which is in the new principle of life, wherein he is daily to receive it: yea, it is with him, and near him; as near him to be daily drawing him into, and preserving him in life, and within the limits of the covenant, as the tempter is to be drawing him into sinning against the covenant, and so into death.

Quest.

Quest. 4. What doth God promise to do for the new house of Israel and Judah in this new covenant?

Answ. He promiseth to put his laws into their mind, and to write them in their hearts. (Oh! happy he that knoweth these laws, this mind, this heart, this manner of writing!) He promiseth to be their God, and that they shall be his people. (This covenant is a powerful covenant; it will make so indeed!) He promiseth to become their teacher, and such a teacher as all shall know him, from the least to the greatest, even so as they shall not need to seek out abroad after the knowledge of him. (It is so where this covenant is made, even with the least with whom it is compleated; but it is not so where it is only begun, or in some few degrees carried on). He promiseth to take away that which alone is able to hinder the good things of the covenant; for he will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will he remember no more. This also is witnessed according to the soul's growth in, and receiving into it the strength of the covenant. For many find sinning against the covenant, and the remembering of their iniquities in their passage; yea, judgment doth continue in the refining time, till that be made to pass away thereby which the judgment is to; but in the covenant itself is rest, joy, peace, satisfaction, life, and powerful redemption and righteousness for evermore.

Quest. 5. How is this covenant made, and how doth the soul enter into it, grow up in it, and reap and enjoy the sweet blessings and promises of it?

Answ. It is made in the faith and obedience of the soul to the gospel, to the power of the endless life. It is made according to the promise. The promise is to him that believes and obeys the gospel. There is no other way in it but union with Christ in the faith, from which flows obedience to the holy commands and requirings of his Spirit. All unbelief and disobedience is out of this holy blessed covenant. They are stops in the way, and hinder the soul both from entering into, and from abiding in, the covenant; yea, the gates of hell may easily prevail against them who do not believe, obey, watch and pray, but enter into the temptations of the enemy, which draw into death, as the motions and requirings of the Spirit lead into life.

A brief ACCOUNT concerning SILENT MEETINGS; the Nature, Use, Intent, and Benefit of them.

THIS is a great mystery, hid from the eye of man, who is run from the inward life into outward observations. He cannot see either that this is required by the Lord of his people, or any edification therein, or benefit thereby; but to the mind that is drawn inward the thing is plain; and the building up hereby in the life of God, and fellowship one with another

another therein, is sweetly felt; and precious refreshment from the presence of the Lord received by them, who singly herein wait upon him according to the leadings and requirings of his Holy Spirit. Now to open the thing a little to the upright-hearted, if the Lord please.

After the mind is in some measure turned to the Lord, his quickenings felt, his seed beginning to arise and spring up in the heart, then the flesh is to be silent before him, and the soul to wait upon him (and for his further appearings) in that measure of life which is already revealed. Now this is a great thing to know flesh silenced, to feel the reasoning thoughts and discourses of the fleshly mind stilled, and the wisdom, light, and guidance of God's Spirit waited for. For man is to come into the poverty of self, into the abasedness, into the nothingness, into the silence of his spirit before the Lord; into the putting off of all his knowledge, wisdom, understanding, abilities, all that he is, hath done, or can do, out of this measure of life, into which he is to travel, that he may be clothed and filled with the nature, Spirit, and power of the Lord.

Now in this measure of life which is of Christ (and in which Christ is, and appears to the soul) there is the power of life and death; power to kill to the flesh; and power to quicken to God; power to cause the soul to cease from its own workings, and power to work in and for the soul what God requires, and what is acceptable in his sight. And in this God is to be waited upon and worshipped continually (both in private and in publick) according as his Spirit draws and teaches.

For the Lord requireth of his people not only to worship him apart, but to meet together to worship him, in the seasons, and according to the drawings, of his Spirit: and they that are taught of him, dare not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is; but watch against the temptations and snares, which the enemy lays to deceive them therefrom, and to disturb their sense by, that they might not feel the drawings of the Father thereunto.

And this is the manner of their worship. They are to wait upon the Lord; to meet in the silence of flesh, and to watch for the stirrings of his life, and the breakings forth of his power amongst them. And in the breakings forth of that power they may pray, speak, exhort, rebuke, sing, or mourn, &c. according as the Spirit teaches, requires, and gives utterance. But if the Spirit do not require to speak, and give to utter, then every one is to sit still in his place (in his heavenly place I mean) feeling his own measure, feeding thereupon, receiving therefrom (into his spirit) what the Lord giveth. Now in this is edifying, pure edifying, precious edifying; his soul who thus waits, is hereby particularly edified by the Spirit of the Lord at every meeting. And then also there is the life of the whole felt in every vessel that is turned to its measure; insomuch as the warmth of life in each vessel doth not only warm the particular, but they are like an heap of fresh and living coals, warming one another, insomuch as a great strength, freshness, and vigour of life flows into all. And if any be burthened, tempted, buffeted by Satan, bowed down, over-

354 *A brief Account concerning Silent Meetings.*

borne, languishing, afflicted, distressed, &c. the estate of such is felt in Spirit, and secret cries, or open (as the Lord pleaseth) ascend up to the Lord for them, and they many times find ease and relief, in a few words spoken, or without words, if it be the season of their help and relief with the Lord.

For absolutely silent meetings (wherein there is a resolution not to speak) we know not; but we wait on the Lord, either to feel him in words, or in silence of spirit without words, as he pleaseth. And that which we aim at, and are instructed to by the Spirit of the Lord as to silent meetings, is that the flesh in every one be kept silent, and that there be no building up, but in the Spirit and power of the Lord.

Now there are several states of people: some feel little of the Lord's presence; but feel temptations and thoughts, with many wanderings and roving of mind. These are not yet acquainted with the power, or at least know not its dominion, but rather feel dominion of the evil over the good in them. And this is a sore travailling and mournful state, and meetings to such as these (many times) may seem to themselves rather for the worse than for the better. Yet even these, turning, as much as may be, from such things, and cleaving (or at least in truth of heart desiring to cleave) to that which disliketh or witnesseth against them, have acceptance with the Lord herein: and continuing to wait in this trouble and distress (keeping close to meetings, in fear and subjection to the Lord who requireth it, tho' with little appearing benefit), do reap an hidden benefit at present, and shall reap a more clear and manifest benefit afterwards, as the Lord wasteth and weareth out that in them, wherein the darkness hath its strength. Now to evidence that the Lord doth require these silent meetings, or meetings after this manner silent, it may thus appear.

God is to be worshipped in spirit, in his own power and life, and this is at his own dispose. His church is a gathering in the Spirit. If any man speak there, he must speak as the oracle of God, as the vessel out of which God speaks; as the trumpet out of which he gives the sound. Therefore there is to be a waiting in silence, till the Spirit of the Lord move to speak, and also give words to speak. For a man is not to speak his own words, or in his own wisdom or time; but the Spirit's words, in the Spirit's wisdom and time, which is when he moves and gives to speak. And seeing the Spirit inwardly nourisheth, when he giveth not to speak words, the inward sense and nourishment is to be waited for, and received as it was given when there are no words. Yea, the ministry of the Spirit and life is more close and immediate when without words, than when with words, as has been often felt, and is faithfully testified by many witnesses. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, how and what things God reveals to his children by his Spirit, when they wait upon him in his pure fear, and worship and converse with him in spirit; for then the fountain of the great deep is unsealed, and the everlasting springs surely give up the pure and living water.

LIFE and IMMORTALITY

Brought to LIGHT through the

G O S P E L.

BEING A TRUE

D I S C O V E R Y

OF THE

NATURE and GROUND

OF THE

RELIGION and KINGDOM of CHRIST;

IN SEVERAL

WEIGHTY QUERIES, Propounded;

AND OTHER

SERIOUS MATTERS treated of,

Highly importing the

ETERNAL SALVATION of SOULS.

WRITTEN BY

ISAAC PENNINGTON,

In the Time of his IMPRISONMENT in READING GOAL.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Oh! blessed is he, who meets with that which powerfully saves! Most mens religion is but a talk and profession of that which they have not; and what will such a kind of religion avail, when it comes to be tried by the piercing fire of the Spirit of burning, and pure (impartial) judgment. Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Alas! how few know that! And yet if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things become new there. Who can bear the decision of this trial? For many pretend to be in Christ, and yet they themselves are still in the old nature and spirit. Be not deceived, saith the apostle, God is not mocked. Alas! how many are deceived about their religion! Indeed it is impossible for a man not to be deceived, who knoweth not the anointing, nor is taught his religion by the anointing. He is truth and no lye, and he teacheth truth and no lye; but mens apprehensions and conceivings upon the holy scriptures and mysteries of God's kingdom, are but like themselves, empty and vain. Oh! that men could see with the true eye, hear with the true ear, understand with the true heart! Then might they know indeed, and come to witness the Ethiopian skin washed, and the leopard spots changed; but till then, they may change from one opinion to another, and from one profession and way of religion to another, and yet in nature, spirit, mind, and heart, yea, and in conversation also (as to the substance thereof), remain still one and the same. And what will become of men, whose hope is in their religion, in their knowledge of Christ, in their faith, in their worship, &c. if all these, when they come to be tried, shall be found wanting of the true nature and virtue, and condemned by the Lord for dead and dry! Oh! that men knew what should be yoked down, what should be turned from and denied, how gloriously and takingly soever it appears! All flesh is grass; all fleshly knowledge and religion must pass away. That which the earthly man can comprehend in his understanding, is but the outward, the fleshly part of religion; the spiritual knowledge, the living knowledge, is reserved for, and given to, the spiritual capacity and understanding, which the children of the Most High received in the new birth, and holy begettings of life.

Here

Here are some queries, held forth in love to thee, reader, to bring thee to a true sense in many weighty matters. They are not of a confounding (unless it be to that part which is not to know), but of an opening nature; they were sweet to my taste, which (as in God's presence, and by the virtue of his life and Spirit flowing in me) relished the things queried of. I desire they may be profitable to thee also, and that thou mayest witness the guidance of God's Spirit, leading thee into, and giving thee faithfully to walk in, the way that leads to eternal rest. For our days in this world are but for a moment, and then we must be judged, and disposed of by the Lord, for ever; each person according to the nature and spirit he is of, and according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or evil. The Lord give thee so to consider thy ways, that thou mayest apply thy heart to true wisdom; which consists in fearing of God, and departing from evil; which the least child, that is taught of God, learns; and those that are grown up in holiness and righteousness, are skilful and perfect in; so that they cannot do any thing against the truth, but in and for the truth.

There are also some questions answered; one about preaching the gospel after the apostasy, another about the reason of God's not teaching others what it pleaseth him to teach us; and the way of his teaching us. There is likewise somewhat concerning the threefold appearance of Christ, and touching Mount Sinai, from whence the law of the letter was given; and Mount Sion, from whence the law of the Spirit goes forth; as likewise concerning the temple and sacrifices, under the gospel, and of the way to know one's election, and to obtain full assurance thereof, &c. All these sprang from life in my heart, for thy sake who breathest after the Lord, and after his pure way and holy path of life, and who readeest in humility, fear, and uprightness; and my prayers to the God of my life go along with them, that thy heart may be opened by him, in the reading of them, and that thou mayest have the sense of them in the shinings of his light in thine own heart, whose work it is to cause it to shine out of the darkness; that his glorious gospel may not be hid from the sons of men; but, through the virtue, power, and operation of the Spirit of truth (which first convinceth of sin, and then leadeth out of it, into that which is pure and holy) they may come to be acquainted with the mystery of life, which hath been hid from ages and generations, but is now made manifest to God's children and sanctified ones; which being made manifest to them, is revealed and known to be Christ in them, the hope of glory. The Lord grant thou mayest know and experience him to be so to thee and in thee, *Amen.*

A

FEW WORDS in GENERAL,

To those that Desire the

KNOWLEDGE of the TRUE GOD.

*The Inspiration of the Almighty giveth Understanding.**We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding, that we may know him that is True.*

IT is a great matter to receive an understanding from the Lord; which until a man doth, his knowledge is neither true, living, nor saving.

Now, he that would receive an understanding from the Lord, must wait to know the beginnings of the new and holy understanding; and what that understanding and knowledge is, which stands in the way thereof, and how to part therewith: and then he must faithfully lose and part with it for the other; which is pure, true, and heavenly.

And when a man hath received an understanding from the Lord, then he may weigh, consider, and come to know things aright: but till then, deceit will lodge in his heart, and have power over him; and his very wisdom and knowledge will pervert him, and turn him aside from the way of life and truth. The wise professing Jews were hindered from owning the Messiah, by the very knowledge which they had gathered and comprehended out of the letter of the scriptures.

But if a man hath received an understanding from the Lord in measure, yet it is an hard matter to keep to that understanding; and he must lie very low and humble, who so doth. Oh! what a continual watch hath my soul had (and still hath) against that part wherein my religion formerly stood! For though the Lord had reached to the pure seed of life in me, and had quickened my soul thereby; yet I knew not how to turn to the seed, and abide in the seed, and to hold my knowledge and life there; but was still striving to live and know (and comprehend and practise) in a part above the seed; and the enemy was still too hard for me, and did often deprive me of the benefit or right use of what the Lord had wrought in me, and freely bestowed upon me.

A

Alas!

Alas ! who can understand this voice ! Surely it is very hard for any so to do, but such who have had some sensible and lively experience thereof in themselves ; but for want of this knowledge, sense, and experience, many are deeply deceived concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and the state of their own souls, concerning faith in him, love to him, pardon of sin and justification in and through him ; regeneration and sanctification by his Spirit ; and concerning walking in the way of holiness, and obeying his commands ; and so err in heart exceedingly (both in doctrine and practice) concerning the weighty things which appertain to salvation.

Now I having erred in time past in my former professions, and been deeply perplexed and distressed, through my erring from the holy seed, Spirit, and power of life ; bear with me ! bear with me ! yea I say again, bear with me, if I pity others, and sincerely desire that their eyes may be opened to see the pure, living, holy, undefiled way, in which no defiled spirit can walk ; but a man must be truly made alive, and truly cleansed in mind and spirit, before he can walk in this way. Now, if we experimentally, most tenderly, and in true love, witness, from the God of life and salvation, where the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the cleansing of his blood and Spirit is met with, and that according to the plain testimony of the scriptures, why are ye offended with us for our love, and for telling you the truth, as the Lord hath opened our eyes, and taught us to see and read it in the scriptures of truth, and as we have experimentally found it in Jesus ?

Well ! the Lord knoweth how we are many times mourning and praying for you, while ye are reviling and backbiting us ; for we know the way and course of that spirit wherein ye oppose us. And, oh ! that ye yourselves also did know what spirit it is, which thus acts you ! For then, surely, ye would confess it to be the very same which opposed Christ in the days of his flesh, having only a different cover and way of appearance ; that, crying him up as to come ; this, as already come ; but both denying him who is the Messiah. For in that ye deny his Spirit, life, appearance and power in the least of his, ye deny him. Oh ! that ye could feel the tender bowels, truth of heart, and true understanding from God's Holy Spirit, wherein this is written ! Oh ! that ye could rightly distinguish between the precious and the vile ; and not call that vile, which in God's sight is precious ; nor that precious, which in God's sight is vile. Ye must feel the holy seed, the living of God, judge in you ; and ye judge only in that, or ye will err in judging according to the appearance, and not judge the righteous judgment.

Reading Goal, 26th of the
Third Month, 1671.

L. P.

L I F E

LIFE and IMMORTALITY

Brought to Light by the

G O S P E L:

BEING

A true Discovery of the NATURE and GROUND of the RELIGION
and KINGDOM of CHRIST, &c.

I.

*Some Queries concerning the State of the Church as it was in the
Apostles Days, and was to be afterwards.*

Query 1. **W**AS not the church exceeding beautiful, and in heavenly glory, in the days of the apostles? Did she only travail after life and glory? Did she not also bring forth? Did she not witness the kingdom come, the power come, the eternal life come? And did she not partake thereof, and dwell therein? Was she not a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and crowned with a crown of twelve stars? Yea, did she not bring forth the man-child, which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron? Who can read this state, who is not in some measure a partaker of the same glory?

Query 2. Was not this heaven afterwards wrapped up, rolled up; and did not this glory pass away? Did not the great red dragon fight with the woman? And did she not fly into the wilderness, and was not the man-child caught up to God? And did not the remnant of her seed (who had the testimony of Jesus, and who kept his commandments) testify and prophesy in sackcloth? Read the xith and xiith chapters of the *Revelations*.

Query 3. Upon the flight of the true church into the wilderness (when she was thus gone out of sight) did not the false church start up; which made a glorious and taking appearance in the world, to the eye of man's wisdom? Did not she sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast (wise and strong) having seven heads,

heads, and ten horns? Was she not arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, making the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication? What do those things mean? What did the wisdom of God thus describe her for?

Query 4. What did the true church carry into the wilderness with her, and what did she leave behind her? Did not the temple, the altar, and the true worshippers go along with her? Did not the Gentiles, such as were not true Jews, such as could not come into the temple (but only into the outward court, and worship there), did not these stay behind? And had not these Gentiles henceforth (from the true church's flight into the wilderness) the outward court given to them, that they might make use of it (and worship in it) as much as they would? The virtue, the life, the power, the Spirit being taken away, and removed with the true church; which fled into the wilderness, what did God regard the outward? *Leave it out of my measure, saith the Lord, and give it to the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 2.*

Query 5. What is the cup, the golden cup, which this false church hath in her hand, wherein are sorceries and witchcrafts, wherewith she bewitcheth people, and maketh them drunk? Is it not a glorious appearance of things without the true life and power? Doctrines concerning God, doctrines concerning Christ, doctrines concerning worship, doctrines concerning sanctity, &c. Yea; but the Spirit, the life, the power, that was in the apostles days, is wanting. What remains of these is to be found with the true church in the wilderness (the blood of whose seed she drinks) not with her.

Query 6. What will become of this great woman in the end; this rich, this glorious church? Shall she continue for ever? Shall she sit as a queen for ever, and never see sorrow? Shall the true church never come out of the wilderness, to be restored to her beauty and glory again? Nay, nay; in one day shall her plagues come; death, and mourning, and famine. It is true, she is wise and strong (and the beast also, on which she sits and rides, who is able to make war with? saith man's wisdom); but wiser and stronger is the Lord God Almighty, who judgeth her, and who is taking and will take to him his great power, wherewith he will thunder against her, until he hath brought her down, and her flesh be utterly burnt with fire.

Query 7. What shall become of those who drink of her cup, and who believe and worship as she teacheth? Shall they not all drink of the wine of the cup of the wrath of God Almighty, poured out without mixture? Shall they not partake of her dreadful plagues, in the hour of her judgment? Read *Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11. and chap. xviii.* For these things are to come to pass as certainly as they were foretold; and when they do come to pass, blessed shall the saints be who have suffered with patience, keeping the commandments and the faith of Jesus; and woe will be to them who have persecuted them, and drunk their blood. Read the *xiii. th, xiv. th, xvi. th, and xix. th* chapters of the *Revelations*, which signify of, and testify to, these things.

362 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Now whereas many say, that the book of the *Revelations* is such a mystical book, that it is not to be understood; to what end then was it written? It was the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, *chap. i. 1.* and would Christ give them forth in such words as could not be understood? Again it is said, *ver. 5.* Blessed is he that readeth, and they *that bear the words of this prophecy*, and keep those things which are *written therein*; for the *time is at hand*. How can any be blessed in reading, or how can any keep what is written therein, without understanding the things contained in it? How can any follow the true church into the wilderness, or avoid being taken with the golden cup of fornications of the false church, or refuse the mark of the beast (that he take it neither on his forehead nor hand, nor have the name of the beast upon him, nor so much as the number of his name) unless he truly and rightly understand these warnings and descriptions of the Holy Spirit of God, given forth in the book, to preserve in the way of truth, in the way of life (tho' thro' great sufferings and tribulations) out of the way of spiritual whoredom and death? For mystical Babylon, the nations of the earth and great-ones (generally) commit fornication with, *Rev. xvii. 2.* and *xviii. 3.* Indeed this book is a mystery to man's wisdom; for it was not given to the wisdom of this world, but is hid from that; but God gave it Christ to give to his servants; and it is not a mystery (but opened and revealed by the Father's Spirit) to the children of the true wisdom, who are instructed and taught of God to escape the bed of whoredom and spiritual fornication, which the earthly wisdom (in the wisest men of this world) is intangled in.

II.

Some Queries on Chap. xxix, and xxx. of DEUT. compared with ROM. x.

Query 1. DID not God command Moses to make a covenant with the children of Israel in the Land of Moab, besides the covenant he made with them in Horeb? *Deut. xxix. 1.*

Quest. 2. What was this covenant? Was it of the same nature with the former, or was it of a different nature? Was not the former the covenant of the law? And was not this the covenant of the gospel? Did not this covenant contain the promise of circumcising the heart? *Deut. xxx. 6.* Whereas, under the other covenant, notwithstanding all the temptations, signs, and miracles which they had seen in Egypt, and in the wilderness, about the space of forty years; yet the Lord had not given them an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto that day. But Moses and Aaron, with Caleb and Joshua, who knew and partook of the other covenant

nant, they were of a better spirit, and understood the leadings and commands of God, and followed after him.

Query 3. Had the Jews minded this covenant, might they not have been able to keep the other also? Did any fail in sacrifices, or outward obedience to the law, who kept to this covenant? What an holy man was Samuel, who did not so much as err in government, but could plead with the people, Whose ox or ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded or oppressed? Zacharias, and Elizabeth his wife, walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And so the children of God in the gospel, who have a new heart, and a new spirit, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit and law of life in Christ Jesus, they also fulfil the righteousness of the law declared in the Letter, *Rom. viii. 4.*

Query 4. What is the commandment of this covenant, and where is it written? The commandments of the other covenant are written in the law of Moses, and in tables of stone; but where is this commandment written, or where is it to be found? Is it in heaven above, to be fetched down from thence; or is it beyond the sea? &c. Nay, is it not very nigh? Is not the Word of this commandment nigh in the mouth and in the heart? And is it not there placed by the Lord for this very end, that men might hear it and do it?

Query 5. Was not this the Word or commandment of life and good, or of death and evil to the Jews? (See *chap. xxx. 14, 15.*) And is it not so also to mankind? He that hears and obeys the word of this commandment, doth he not live and partake of good? He that disobeyeth it, doth he not die, and undergo wrath and evil, tribulation and anguish upon his soul from the hand of the Lord, either poured out upon him at present, or treasured up for him against hereafter? Read *Rom. ii. 5, 6, &c.*

Query 6. Was not this other covenant, this second covenant, this new covenant, which God bid Moses make with them then, the same which God makes with believers in the days of the gospel? The old covenant had been made with the Jews before; was not this the new? They had had the law in the letter before, wherein the commandment was afar off; but is not the commandment of the new covenant (the law of the Spirit of life) nigh? And had not the people of the Jews the Spirit of the Lord nigh to instruct them, by virtue of this covenant? That they had so, is plain, *Nehem. ix. 20.* and *Isai. lxiii. 10.*; but whether they had the Spirit nigh to them by virtue of the old covenant, or by virtue of the new (which Moses was appointed by God to make with them, as is afore expressed) let the wise in heart consider. And whether the tender mercies which God all along expressed to them (as is mentioned *Isai. lxiii. 7.*) were by virtue of that covenant wherein God had continual advantages and provocations against them, or by virtue of this covenant, from which mercy and redemption is continually springing freely towards the Israel of God?

364 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Query 7. Whether the Word of faith which the apostles preached, was not the same Word nigh in the mouth and heart which Moses preached? Is not the Word of life, the Word of faith, the Word of the new covenant, one and the same thing in all ages and generations? Indeed there are outward sayings and testimonies after divers manners; but Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And the commandment of life in the mouth and heart changeth not, but is always one and the same.

Query 8. What is the justification under this covenant; or what is that which God hath an eye to in justifying any person here? Is it not the obedience of faith? What doth God condemn but unbelief? And will he not justify faith? For faith flows from life, and life from Christ. So that indeed here the holy root makes all that are of it holy, and the righteous root makes all that are of it righteous; and he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous, 1 *John* iii. 7. And Christ is here indeed made unto the soul that thus receives him and obeys him as the Word and commandment of life: I say, he is indeed made unto such an one of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and blessed are they that do not mistake about this, but come truly to witness it.

III.

Some Queries concerning Destruction and Salvation.

Query 1. **W**HETHER there be not somewhat which destroys, which hath the nature of death and destruction in it, and which leaveneth with death and destruction, as it is let in and received?

Query 2. Whether there be not somewhat also which saves, which hath the nature of life and salvation in it, and which leaveneth with life and salvation, as it is let in and received?

Query 3. Whether that which destroys be not near, and whether that which saves be not near also? (Doth not Christ stand at the door and knock? And may not he be heard and let in? See *Rev.* iii. 20.).

Query 4. Whether this, which is so near, and so able to save, was not that which saved in all ages and generations, even before Christ appeared in a body of flesh, and the shedding his blood?

Query 5. Whether, after Christ appeared in a body of flesh, and shedding his blood, any can be saved thereby; or by any believing on Christ whatsoever; without letting in or receiving that life and power which saves? Be not deceived; God is not mocked. He that believeth in the power which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and is subject to the power, shall be redeemed and saved thereby. For death came by the soul's separation from the power which gave life, and Christ saves by bringing to the power again (so that he that would indeed be saved by Christ, must believe in God through him, and feel the power which redeems). But let a man believe

believe ever so much concerning God and Christ, until he feel this, and be changed by the virtue and operation of this, he cannot be saved, but is still in his sins, and under condemnation and wrath, because of sin, whatever he thinks of himself.

Query 6. Whether Christ was not the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; even before he took up the body of flesh, while he was in the body, after he laid down the body, and after he took it up again and appeared in it to his disciples?

Query 7. Whether Christ, where he inwardly and spiritually appears and is received, doth not discover, shake, disettle, and remove that nature, which cannot receive the law, and so bring up and bring forth the heavenly seed, which was afore the law (which is appointed by God for a generation to himself) which always doth the will of him who quickens it, and who fills it with life and power from on high?

IV.

Some Queries on COLOSS. i. 27, 28, 29. (Observe that in ver. 27. whereas it is in our common Translation rendered, This Mystery among the Gentiles; it is in some other Translations rendered, This Mystery in the Gentiles; and so it is in the Greek.)

Query 1. **W**HETHER there be not a mystery of light, a mystery of life; somewhat of true light hidden, somewhat of true life hidden in the Gentiles? Whatsoever makes manifest, is light, saith the apostle, *Ephes. v. 13, 14.* And that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, *Rom. i.* Is there not somewhat in the Gentiles, which in some measure discovers somewhat contrary to God in them, and is many times working in their minds against it? Is not this of a precious nature? and hath it not precious virtue and power in it, though it be little took notice of by them?

Query 2. Do not the saints know what this mystery is? Do they not know what is the riches and glory of it? Indeed it hath been hid from ages and generations, so that they knew it not; but is it hid from the saints also in the day of the gospel? is it not revealed in them and to them?

Query 3. What is this mystery in them in whom it is revealed? Is it not Christ in them? Is it not the hope of glory in them? Do they not know it to be Christ? Do they not know it to be the hope of glory? Who can damp the faith, or darken the knowledge, of those who feel the mystery of life revealed in them? who feel Christ (the hope of glory) living, dwelling, and reigning in the authority and power of the Father, in their own hearts?

Query 4. Did not the apostles preach this mystery? Did they not preach the word of faith within in the heart? the kingdom within? Christ, the
hope

366 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

hope of glory within? Did they not preach this message of the gospel (which they had from Christ to carry to men) that *God is Light, and in him is no darkness at all*? And did they not preach it to this very end, to turn men, and bring men from the darkness within to the light within? that in it they might have union and fellowship with God, who is Light. Can any have fellowship with God, who is Light, but as his spirit is brought out of the inward darkness into the inward light?

Query 5. What did the apostle Paul, and the other apostles aim at, in their warning men and teaching them in all wisdom? Was it not to perfect the work of God in them, and that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus?

Query 6. Did not the grace and power of God go along with the apostles, and work in them mightily to this end, even for the perfecting the saints? And the grace and power of God, working mightily against sin and the power of Satan, is it not able to conquer Satan, and to make him fall like lightening, and to trample him under feet? Consider *ver. 19.* and *2 Thess. i. 11, 12.*

Query 7. Did the apostles ever preach such a doctrine, that no man could be perfected in this life; but man must always (every day) be committing sin? Nay, did they not speak wisdom among them that were perfect, and say, Let as many of us as be perfect, be thus minded? Did they not distinguish between the weak, and between the strong and perfect? Do they not speak of some that had overcome the wicked one, and were born of God, and did not sin? It is a precious thing to feel the power of God regenerating the mind; but it is much more precious to witness it regenerated. But that state none know but they that are in it; but this is most certain, that sin is shut out of it, and that all things are new there.

Query 8. Will the mystery of life, where it is received and turned to, ever cease working against the mystery of death, until it hath wrought it out of the mind? Shall judgment never be brought forth unto victory over sin in the heart? Shall there never be pure and full communion with the Lord here in this world, without the interruption of sin? *These things*, saith John, *I write to you, that your joy may be full.* Shall the joy never be full in any? How can the joy be full, where sin hath power and breaks in upon the soul, and prevaleth upon the mind, even to the committing of it daily? The soul that is weary of sin, and grieved at its grieving God's Spirit thereby, can never come to full union and fellowship with the Lord, nor to have its joy full, while it doth that which grieves God's Spirit; for it is impossible but it should grieve the soul also, and weaken its joy and rejoicing in the Lord.

V.

Some Queries concerning the Way of Life, and Mystery of the Gospel.

Query 1. **I**S not the way of life, the way of holiness, the way of truth, the way of peace, one and the same in all ages and generations? Was there ever, or shall there ever be another than that which was from the beginning?

Query 2. Is not this way a pure way, a clean way? Can any impure thing walk in it? Is not the gate strait, and the way narrow, that leadeth unto life? Is it easy finding it? or is it easy entering into it, and walking in it? Doth not the corruption and unholiness of the hearts of many, hinder them from walking in the holy way of life and peace?

Query 3. Is not this way a mystery? Can any learn it but those whose eyes are opened by the Lord, and to whom the mystery is revealed by him? Can any discern or understand it, but the children of the pure heavenly wisdom, whom the Lord teacheth, and whose eyes he openeth, to see and justify it in every age?

Query 4. Is not the whole vision of God, the whole vision of life, the whole vision of peace, a book sealed to all sorts (both learned and unlearned in every age and generation) but those to whom the Lord unseals it?

Query 5. May not such as are not at all acquainted with the mystery of godliness, the mystery of life, the mystery of redemption, read what the scriptures say concerning these things, and get a great deal of knowledge (from the letter of the scriptures) into their minds, and be able to raise doctrines, reasons, uses, &c. and back all by scriptures very plentifully? But are not those who teach not from the mystery of life, and gift of the Spirit, but only what they have gathered and formed from the letter; I say, are not such blind leaders of the blind? and is it possible but that they themselves, and such as follow them, should fall into the ditch? For it is only the mystery of life and redemption (not a literal knowledge and wisdom, though with an endeavour to practise according thereto) which preserves out of the ditch. Oh! that this were duly considered of! for it is tenderly and weightily proposed.

Query 6. What is the knowledge of Christ which saves? Is it a knowledge of him after the letter, or a knowledge of him in the Spirit and power of the endless life? Can he be known truly, livingly, and savingly, without the Father's revealing him in man? Or can any truly call him Lord, but they that are first taught by the Father to discern his spiritual and heavenly glory, and to receive him and bow to him in Spirit?

Query 7. What is it to kiss the Son? Can any do so but those who discern and receive the light of his Spirit?

Query

363 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Query 8. Can any truly know the Father, unless the Son reveal him? or can any know the Son, unless the Father reveal him? I know men may get notions out of the scriptures concerning God the Father and his Son: but can they get true knowledge of either without the inspiration of the Almighty which giveth understanding?

Query 9. Can any person fear God and depart from evil (any-where upon the face of the earth) without some visit of the Lord Jesus Christ to his soul, and without receiving somewhat of life and power from him? He is the wisdom of God, he can teach this; but can any else teach it? If none else can teach it, then he that learned it, must needs learn it of him. Is not this (to wit, to fear God and depart from evil) the path of wisdom, which is hid from all living, but such as are taught by Christ, who is the wisdom of God? Read *Job* xxviii. 12. to the end of the chapter, and consider. For doth not the Spirit of Christ, which convinceth of sin, reach to all men, and minister to all men, inwardly and spiritually, in some days of instruction about fearing God and departing from evil?

Query 10. Can any be acquainted with the fear of God, and be sensible of the hour of his judgment, and give glory to him and worship him, but they must know and receive the everlasting gospel? They that are sent to preach this after the apostasy, are they not sent to preach it as the everlasting gospel? Read *Rev.* xiv. 6, 7. and consider. For come to life and power in any doctrine, which Christ sends his messengers to preach towards the salvation of mens souls, a man comes to the gospel presently; but read and assent to, and practise all the things (as well as men can) related in the scriptures, without the life and power, and so acknowledge and believe all that is said concerning Christ; yet for all this, and in the midst of all this, a man may miss of the gospel; for the gospel is an hidden mystery of the life and power, see *Coloss.* i. 26, 27.

Query 11. Is not the message of the gospel, That God is Light, and in him is no darkness at all? Doth not the Spirit of Christ preach this, more or less, to all people under heaven? Yea, is not the gospel preached in every creature, and hid in those that are lost, whom the god of this world blindeth? For is not the Spirit of God, in some measure, every-where convincing men of sin, and drawing them out of darkness into the sense and obedience of light? And will not this be the general and universal condemnation of the world, that they did not bring their deeds to the light, but turned from it and hated it, loving the darkness more than it, because their deeds were evil, and they had not a mind to part with them, but to remain and abide in them?

Alas! alas! men should pass through the knowledge of things after the letter, into the knowledge of things after the Spirit and power of the endless life; but instead thereof, men stick in their apprehensions of the letter: and if any man be taught of God, and have the things of his kingdom, and the mystery of the scriptures, revealed to him in the Spirit, and so signify of them

them in the words which God's wisdom teacheth; yet so men know them not, but oppose and resist the ministration of life and power in their day and generation! And this will be bitterness in the latter end, even as bitter to the professors of this age, as the former denying of Christ's appearance in the flesh was to the professors of that age.

VI.

Some Queries concerning Righteousness or Justification.

Query 1. **I**S there not a new covenant under the gospel, as well as there was an old covenant under the law?

Query 2. What did the old covenant require? Did it not require obedience to the law of Moses? What doth the new covenant require? Doth it not require faith in Christ and obedience to his Spirit? Doth it not require faith in the grace, and obedience to the grace which bringeth salvation, teaching to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, &c.?

Query 3. What is the righteousness or justification in the old covenant? What doth God justify in the old covenant? Doth he not justify the obedience thereto, and condemn all disobedience? What is the righteousness or justification of the new covenant? What doth God justify in men under the new covenant? Doth he not justify their faith in Christ, and their obedience to the law of his Spirit? Is not whatsoever is not of faith sin, and condemned; and whatsoever is of faith holy, and justified?

Query 4. What is faith? Is it not the gift of God? What is obedience? Doth it not flow from faith? Is it not performed by the power and in the newness of the Spirit? and is not that justifiable, and always justified in the sight of God? Doth it not spring from the new tree, from the holy root of life in the heart? and whatsoever springs therefrom, is it not holy and righteous? And is not whatsoever is truly holy and righteous, justified and accounted righteous by the holy and righteous God?

Query 5. To what end was Christ made under the law, and did fulfill the righteousness of the law? Was it not that he might accomplish and fulfill that righteousness, and so make way for the bringing in of the everlasting righteousness, even of the righteousness of his own nature and Spirit, which is everlasting? Is not this the righteousness which the children of the new covenant experience in the new and living way? Is not this far beyond the righteousness of the law, if they could fulfill it ever so exactly from the letter? For I feel a vast difference between that righteousness which would belong to me from the law, and the righteousness which flows into my heart from the nature and Spirit of Christ revealed in me, and which floweth up in me from my union with him: for this is absolutely a righteousness of another nature, of another kind, of another root.

370 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Query 6. If Christ's fulfilling the law of Moses, the law of the first covenant, were imputed to us as our righteousness, and we justified in the sight of God thereby, were not then our righteousness the righteousness of the first covenant in nature, and our justification a justification by the righteousness of the first covenant? For Christ was made under the law, made under the first covenant, and fulfilled the righteousness of the first covenant; so that if that be imputed to us for righteousness, then the righteousness of the first covenant is imputed to us for righteousness, and is our righteousness.

Query 7. Was not faith imputed to Abraham for righteousness? What was his righteousness? Was it not the faith which he had from Christ, whereby and wherewith he believed God? Is not faith of the nature of Christ? Is not true faith justified for ever, and doth it not justify him in whom it is found? And doth not gospel-obedience flow from faith? and hath it not of the nature of faith in it? Oh! how pure and precious was it in the eye of God, that Abraham reasoned not, consulted not with flesh and blood, but retired into faith in the pure power! *He believed God, say the scriptures, and it was accounted to him for righteousness:* and shall it not be imputed to us also, if we have the same faith, and believe in the same power?

VII.

Some Queries about being under the Law, and being under Grace.

Query 1. **W**HETHER they that have received the Spirit of grace, and are under the Spirit of grace; I say, whether they are under the law also, or witness freedom therefrom?

Query 2. What is the law? Is it not a ministration of death, of bondage, of condemnation? What is the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of grace? Is it not a Spirit of life, a Spirit of liberty, a Spirit that frees from bondage? They that have received it, and are in subjection to it, do they not partake of its liberty, and through it come into dominion over sin and death?

Query 3. Is the law to the righteous or unrighteous? Whom was it made for? He that cometh into the holy and righteous nature of the seed, doth he not come from under the law? Doth he not come into the nature, state and Spirit, which is free from the law?

Query 4. What is it to come through the law into the liberty and redemption of sons? What is it to know the seed free in the particular, and to come into the freedom of the seed? Doth not the Son make free, the Truth of God make free, all that come to it and dwell in it? and are not they that are made free by it, free indeed? O Sion! thy children are all free-born! Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all; and she bringeth forth none but free children. They that dwell in the height
of

of notion, they are not free, but they that dwell in the power of life, know that which makes free, and witness freedom by it.

VIII.

Some Queries for the Professors of Christianity to consider of, and try their States by. For it is good for every one to know and understand his Estate aright (what it is in the Sight of the Lord) and not to be mistaken in a Matter of so great Concernment.

Query 1. **I**S thy spirit, heart, mind, soul and body, a temple for God to dwell in? Who dwells in thy heart? Doth the Holy Spirit or the unclean spirit? Is that dislodged and purged out of thee, with which God will not dwell? Is that discovered and taken away, in which the wicked one dwelleth? O Jerusalem! wash thine heart from wickedness; how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee! O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? Is not forbearing to touch every unclean thing, and cleansing from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, more necessary to the state of a son and daughter of the Most High than most people are aware of? Read 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. and chap. vii. 1.

Query 2. Is Christ revealed in thee? Doth God dwell any-where, in any heart, but where Christ is, but where he is inwardly and spiritually revealed? Know ye not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? And can any know Christ in them, who have not had him revealed there by the Father? Almost all sorts of pretenders to Christ own him as spoken of without; but the true Christian witnesseth him revealed within: for it pleaseth the Father to reveal the Son in such; and none can be truly ingrafted into Christ, but as Christ is in some measure made manifest within.

Query 3. How dost thou confess Jesus to be the Lord? Is it by notions from the letter, or by feeling his Spirit and power revealed within, and thy heart made subject to his Spirit and power inwardly revealed? For there is a confessing Christ in and by the Spirit, and a confessing him without the Spirit, according as men can read, conceive, and apprehend of him from the letter. Consider which of these thine is.

Query 4. Art thou come out of the apostasy and spirit of darkness, into the light and Spirit of Christ? What was the apostasy from? Was it not from the Spirit, from the anointing? Wherein did it consist? Did it consist in holding a knowledge of Christ, and form of godliness out of the power? Art thou returned to the anointing? To the Holy Spirit of the Father? Hast thou received it? Dost thou live and walk in it, and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh?

Query 5. Dost thou know the tree of righteousness, and the tree of unrighteousness, inwardly? Hast thou felt the axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and it cut down; and the holy plant of God (the plant of his

renown) planted in thy heart, and bringing forth fruit to him? Can the fruit ever become good in thee till the tree be made good? Can the corrupt tree ever bring forth the holy fruit of righteousness to the Lord? Oh! mind thy growth! I mean, from what thou growest, and from what thy fruit proceedeth: for all the knowledge, faith, love, zeal, practices, &c. which proceed not from the renewed Spirit and nature, is not the good fruit which God calls for and accepts; but the denying the least custom or fashion of this world, from a renewed nature, and from the drawings and teachings of God's Spirit, is good fruit, and accepted by him.

Query 6. Can any be redeemed to God, but by his judgment and righteousness revealed in them? Is the soul redeemed from its enemies, while its enemies remain in strength, and have the dominion over it? Where grace is received, and the soul taught by it and subject to it, doth it not break the dominion of sin? As the spirit of judgment and burning is felt in any heart, doth it not cut down and burn up sin there? And as the righteous Spirit is turned to, is not his righteous nature received, and doth not the holy and righteous seed spring up in the heart? and as it springeth up, doth it not redeem and deliver that which is joined to it? Can any be redeemed by a righteousness at a distance, without partaking of the new, and holy, and righteous image of the Son? And he that is righteous in measure, he may do righteousness: but no man can do righteousness, until he become righteous, by being joined to, changed by, and in some measure brought forth a new plant to God, in the new, righteous, and holy seed. See 1 John iii. 7.

Query 7. Do ye indeed know the new covenant? Was it ever inwardly revealed in you? Do ye know the difference between reading the holy directions given forth in the scriptures, and so getting them into your minds and practising them, as well as you can; I say, do ye know the difference between this and God's writing them in your hearts, and causing you to walk in his ways? Do ye know the difference between reading in the letter and in the Spirit; and between walking according to the oldness of the letter, and according to the newness of the Spirit? Oh! that ye might not be deceived about these things, but might know the truth, as it is in Jesus, and come into fellowship with us therein! For truly our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, in that which changeth not, but is one and the same for ever: yea, the Lord our God hath redeemed us out of all the changeable ways, religions and worships, into the one pure way of life, and into the worship in the one Spirit and truth, which changeth not, but is still what it was, even one and the same before the law of Moses, or writings of the prophets, all the time of the law, while Christ was in the flesh, afterwards when he was revealed in Spirit, and all the time of the apostasy, and after the apostasy, and so for ever.

IX.

A Question answered about Preaching the Gospel after the Apostasy.

Quest. **W**HAT doth God after the apostasy send an angel to preach the everlasting gospel, after a manner different from what it was preached before the apostasy? How was it preached before the apostasy? Was it not preached thus, That in Christ alone is remission of sins, and salvation through faith in his blood? How is it to be preached after the apostasy? Is not an angel from God sent to preach it thus; Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters? Is this the same gospel that was preached before? How different is the sound thereof! Surely this would seem not the same, but rather another gospel, to any man who is not taught of God, and hath not received of him the true understanding to observe and discern the nature of things.

Ans. The gospel is the same in substance, though differing in sound and manner of appearance; and they that judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment, experience it to be the same: for whoever receives the gospel thus preached, receives the power of God unto salvation, which goeth along with his fear, and with the hour of judgment, and with the true worship.

And this is the reason why the Lord sends his angel thus to preach it; that he might shut out the birth of the false wisdom, and convey it to the children of the true wisdom. For in the apostasy, the doctrines of the knowledge of Christ had been corrupted, and held in the wrong part; and men had got a wrong knowledge and a dead belief, concerning Christ and his blood, &c.

Therefore to shut out these, God so orders his gospel to be preached, as these cannot understand it, nor know it to be the gospel, nor come into this spiritual ministration of it; but those whom the Lord toucheth, whose hearts he openeth and quickeneth, they (in the demonstration of his Spirit) have the sense and obedience of it: for men had got a form of religion, a form of knowledge, a form of doctrine, a form of worship out of the power. Therefore the Lord comes with the light of his Spirit, to sever between that which was known and held out of the power, and that which was received and held in the power, and so preached the truth, that none but those that are of the truth, can own and receive it.

Had he sent an angel to preach the birth of Christ, the death of Christ, his resurrection, &c. all the dead would receive this; but to preach thus, *Fear God, come to the Spirit of judgment and burning; worship him that made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and fountains of waters*; who can understand what this means? Who can know this to be the everlasting gospel, but he that is taught of God?

This

374 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

This is to preach God the creator, saith the wise professor; this is not to preach Christ the redeemer; this is not to preach the everlasting gospel, will they readily say. Yes; but God who is wise, and knows what the gospel is, and sends his angel to preach it after the apostasy, sends it thus to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people: read Rev. xiv. 6, 7. and consider seriously, and spurn not against the way of God's preaching his everlasting truth, wherein is wrapped up the eternal salvation and happiness of mankind; yea, more especially of this age, who ought to bow to God in this his way of dispensing his truth, which he himself hath chosen.

Now, consider this one thing; was ever the gospel thus preached before this age? The same gospel was preached from the beginning; but was it ever thus preached before? The seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head; so it was preached to Adam: In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed; so it was preached to Abraham: To us a child is born, to us a Son is given, &c. so it was preached in the days of the prophets: By this man, every one that believeth in his name, shall receive remission of sins. So it was preached in the apostles days.

And in the reformation from popery, some of the doctrines about free justification by grace, and of remission of sins by faith in Christ, &c. were revived; but, was it ever preached thus before our age? Did persons ever come forth in the power and authority of God, bidding men fear him, and be sensible of the hour of his judgment, even of his mighty day which was at hand; and come out of all false ways and worships, into the worship of him who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and fountains of waters? I say, did persons ever come forth thus, and preach the everlasting gospel thus, preach these doctrines to men, as the gospel of God, before this day? And let men well consider, whether it be not indeed of God, and by his command and power thus preached; and take heed of opposing his message, lest they be found fighters against him.

For mind: was not this always the sum and substance in every dispensation? Could men be saved by believing that the seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head? Or that in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth should be blessed? Or, that a child should be born, and a Son given? Or that, through Christ's name, remission of sins was to be had, &c.? without coming into the true fear, which teacheth and causeth to depart from evil; and without giving glory to God, in bowing to his Spirit's instructions and teachings; and without worshipping him, who made heaven and earth, and sea, and fountains of waters? Or could any fear the Lord, and give glory to him, and come under the hour of his judgment, and worship him, who made heaven, and earth, and sea, and fountains of waters; but they must first feel the power of the gospel overcoming their spirits, and leading them thither.

X.

Two Questions answered; one concerning others not learning what God teacheth us; the other concerning the Way of his Teaching us.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the reason that others cannot learn nor become subject to the same spiritual truths, which God makes manifest to us, and subjecteth our spirits to?

Ans. The reason is, because they do not learn the same way that God teacheth us; and so, though they have many advantages above us of parts, learning, &c. and study hard to know much; yet not coming into the right way, wherein God's Spirit teacheth, they never come to learn the truth, as it is there taught.

Quest. 2. *But what is the way wherein God teacheth you?* may some say.

Ans. Thus God teacheth us, by giving us an understanding to know him that is true, and by opening an ear in us to hear his voice; and so, being kept within the limits of that understanding and ear, we come to hear and know aright.

Take heed (said Christ) *how ye hear.* Oh! the Lord hath made us sensible of the weight of that scripture; and we have often experienced, that it is easy to hear amiss, and read amiss, and pray amiss, and believe amiss, and hope amiss; but hard to do any of these aright. Therefore, we are taught still to wait for the stirring of the waters, for the moving of God's Holy Spirit upon our spirits; and then healing virtue and ability is felt and received from him, to perform what he requires.

Thus, when we read the scriptures, our eyes are towards him, and we watch against our own understandings, against what they could gather or comprehend of themselves, and wait to feel how he will open our spirits, and what he will make manifest to them, being opened; and if he drop down nothing, we gather nothing; but if he give light, then in his light we see and receive light. So in praying, we wait to feel the birth of life (which is of the Father, and which the Father hears) breathe in us; and so far as the Spirit of the Father breathes upon it, and it breathes to the Father, so far we pray; and when life stops, we stop, and dare not offer up to God any sacrifice of our own, but what the Father prepares and gives us. So in eating and drinking, and whatever we do, our heart is retired to the Lord, and we wait to feel every thing sanctified by his presence and blessing; and, indeed, here every thing is sweet unto us. And in whatever God enables us to do, we narrowly watch to that direction of Christ, *not to let the left hand know what the right hand doth.* For we are nothing of ourselves, nor can do any thing of ourselves; therefore whatever is done in us, as we feel the grace of God, the virtue and power of his life working all in us; so it is still given us to attribute all the honour and glory thereto.

And

376 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

And in this temper of spirit we find nothing too hard for us; for the strength of Christ is still at hand, even in the midst of our weakness; and the riches of the kingdom is still at hand in the midst of our poverty and nothingness; and his strength works, and our weakness doth not hinder the glory of him that works through it. So being beaten to it, by constant sense, and daily experience, that it is not by our willing or running, according to our wisdom and strength, that we can attain any thing; but by God's shewing mercy to us in Christ; we therefore daily wait at the posts of God's heavenly wisdom, to feel the gate of mercy and tender love opened to us, and mercy and love flow in upon us; whereby we may, and dally do obtain what our hearts desire and seek after, blessed be the Lord for ever.

And truly here in the springings of love, and openings of mercy from our God, we have fellowship and converse with the Father and Son, and one with another, in the holy Spirit of life; and we testify of these things to others, that they also might come into the same fellowship, and be of the same faith which flows from, and abides in, and makes living, in the power and life eternal.

The Lord guide all tender, breathing, panting spirits hither, that they may be satisfied in the goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord, and may eat abundantly of the fatness of his house, and drink of the rivers of his pleasures, and not wander up and down any longer in their own barren thoughts, apprehensions, and conceivings upon the scriptures.

XI.

Of the threefold Appearance of Christ; to wit, under the Law, in a Body of Flesh, and in his Spirit and Power.

FIRST, *Under the law.* Various were the appearances of Christ; sometimes as an angel, in the likeness of a man; so to Abraham, and so to Jacob, when Jacob wrestled with him, and prevailed, and had overcome; so to Joshua, or the captain of the Lord's host, at his besieging Jericho; so to Moses in the bush, he appeared as an angel, *Acts* vii. 35. so likewise in visions. Those glorious appearances of God to the prophets in visions, were the appearances of Christ; as particularly, that glorious appearance of God sitting upon a throne, and his train filling the temple, and the Seraphims crying, *Holy! holy! holy is the Lord of hosts; his glory is the fulness of the whole earth!* *Isa.* vi. This was an appearance of Christ to Isaiah, as is manifest, *John* xii. 41. where the Evangelist (relating to that place) useth this expression: *These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* So he was the angel of God's presence, which went before the Jews, in all their journeyings and travels out of Egypt, through the sea, and in the wilderness, and in the time of the Judges; and wrought all their deliverances for them, as is signified, *Isa.* lxiii. 9. *In all their*

their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them, &c. So with the Three Children, he appeared in the midst of the fiery furnace in a form like the Son of God, as Nebuchadnezzar judged, *Dan. iii. 25.*

Now indeed the whole law was a shadow of him, who was to come to be the substance of it, and to perform that inwardly in the hearts of his, which the law figured forth, and represented outwardly. Thus Moses and all the prophets were forerunners of him, the great prophet of the spiritual Israel of God. All the priests, especially the high-priest, were types and forerunners of him, and to end in him, who is the high-priest over the household of God for ever. The judges and saviours were types of him, the great Saviour and Redeemer: for they saved not by their own strength, but by his Spirit and power coming upon them; so that the yoke (which was made and brought upon them by their rebellion against the Lord, and disobedience to his law) was still broken, because of the anointing.

David, Solomon, and the good kings, were types of him. David, of his conquest over his spiritual enemies; Solomon, of his ruling his Israel in peace, after he had conquered their enemies.

Circumcision was a type of his circumcising the heart, that his children, (his holy seed) might love the Lord their God with all their heart, and live.

The passover, and blood of the lamb, was a type of his blood, and sprinkled upon the conscience, which preserveth against the stroke and power of the destroyer; and so God passeth over all such, when he visits for sin and transgression.

The outward sabbath was a type of the pure rest, which Christ gives to those that believe in his name: for indeed they that truly believe in him do enter into rest, and cease from their own labour and workings of themselves, and witness God's working in them, both *to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

The outward law, in the letter, written in tables of stone, was a shadow of the inward, living, pure, powerful, spiritual law of love and life, which God writes in the hearts of his children, which constrains them to obedience, and enables them to do all that God requires of them with ease and delight. For truly the yoke of his law is easy, and the burden of his commandments is light; so that they are not at all grievous to them that are under, and in subjection to, his Spirit.

When the mind is gathered, and brought from under the spirit and power of darkness into his Spirit and power, oh! how easy is it to believe, to love, to obey, &c. Indeed there is nothing but love, and faith, and obedience, and life, and righteousness, and holiness, and pure power, and peace, and joy here. *For the old things are passed away, and all things are become new in Christ,* to them that are in the new creation in him.

So Canaan, the Holy Land, represented the Land of life, or country of life, into which God gathers, and in which he feeds and preserves all the

378 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

living, whom he gathers out of the territories of death and darkness. And the plenty and fullness of the land of Canaan, and the sweet rivers therein, signified the abundance of rich things, and the rivers of God's pleasure, whereof his redeemed ones drink, as they come to live, and dwell, and walk, and sup in and with him.

Jerusalem, the holy city, was a figure of the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of all them that are born of the Spirit; and the hill whereon Jerusalem was built, signified God's holy mountain, whereon this his city is built; and the inhabitants of the outward Jerusalem signified the inhabitants of the new and inward Jerusalem; and the temple signified Christ's body, and the bodies of the saints, which are temples, which the Holy One dwells in the midst of. And that altar in the outward temple signified the altar in this inward temple, which all the true, inward, spiritual Jews have right to partake of, and none else. The fire in the outward temple, and the candlesticks, and the lights which were never to go out, signified the holy fire in the spiritual temple, which comes from heaven, wherewith all the spiritual sacrifices are to be offered up; and the candlestick is to hold the light (and the priests to keep the lamps burning) or God will remove it out of its place. So the holy garments of the priests signified the robes of righteousness, innocence, and purity, wherewith the people of God under the gospel (who are a royal priesthood to him) are to be cloathed.

And the ark signified that which holds the law of the new covenant, and the pot of manna, with which kind of food God fed and nourished the soul in the wilderness, before he brought it into the Holy Land, must be for an everlasting memorial in the land of the living. For indeed Christ appeared to, and was with, that people in the wilderness, in a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; which signified the leadings of God's Spirit in the day of the gospel, *Isai. iv. 5.* And he was the rock that followed them; and he was the manna of which they did eat, and the water of which they did drink; for they did eat and drink of the heavenly things in a figure, and (as their spirits were at any time opened) had a taste and sense of the true food, in and through the figure; yea, doubtless, at some times, they had all some sense, and did all eat of the same spiritual meat as we now eat of, *and did all drink of the same spiritual drink as we now drink of, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.* for they were not only all under the cloud, and did not only all pass through the sea, but they were also all baptized in the cloud and in the sea, having a sense of the pure power of the Lord, and of his outstretched arm made bare for them; in which sense they sang his praise, though they soon afterwards forgot his works, *Psal. cvi. 11, 12.* So likewise there was Aaron's rod, that budded, laid up in the ark, which is the evidence of the true priesthood and ministry for ever; and that which is so, is not to be spurned against, but still to be acknowledged and honoured, as of God.

In

In it also were the tables of the law, in the representative ark; in the true ark are the tables of the law of life, which God writes by the finger of his Spirit, and appoints to be kept in the spiritual ark for ever.

Above the ark was the mercy-seat, with two cherubims of glory, one at each end of it, spreading their wings on high over the mercy-seat, between whom God dwelt or sat, where God met with and communed with Moses, and the priests under the law, when they came to worship him, and enquire of him; which figured out the true mercy-seat under the gospel, where the true priests (the true circumcision of the spiritual Israel of God) have access with boldness to the throne of grace, that (through the high-priest of their profession) they may obtain mercy and grace, to help in time of need.

So under the law, all the sacrifices (the sin-offering, the peace-offering, the thank-offering, the heave-offering, the wave-offering, the whole burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the drink-offering, &c.) signified Christ, the one offering, who comprehends them all; and the holy, spiritual, heavenly offerings, which the spiritual people (the priests of the gospel) are daily to offer up to God: and the sweet spices, frankincense, and odours, signified the sweet seasonings of the gospel sacrifices with grace, with salt, with the Spirit, with the fresh breathings of life, with innocency, with meekness, with tenderness, with zeal, with faith, with love, &c. which yields a most pleasant scent in the nostrils of the Lord.

Now in the bullock and goat for the sin-offering, the blood was to be brought into the holy place, to make atonement; and the fat and inwards burnt on the altar; and the flesh, skin, and dung, carried forth and burnt without the camp. What means this? Oh! how precious is it to read the figures of the heavenly things with true understanding! but to read through the figures (with the eye of life, with the eye of the Spirit) into the invisible substance, this is sweet, precious, and heavenly indeed!

Secondly, *Concerning Christ's appearance in a body of flesh.* When the time of these shadows drew towards an end, and the fullness of time was come, he who thus appeared in several types and shadows among that people of the Jews under the law, he now came down from the Father, debased himself, and clothed himself like a man, partaking of flesh and blood; and was in all things made like unto us (excepting sin; for he was the Lamb without spot) humbling himself to come under the law, and under the curse, that he might redeem those that are under the law (and under the curse) by fulfilling the righteousness thereof, and bringing them through into the righteousness everlasting.

Now while he was in the body, his glory did shine to the eyes of the children of the true wisdom: his disciples (to whom not flesh and blood, nor the wisdom and knowledge which they could get from the letter, but his Father revealed him) they saw the hidden glory; they saw through the veil of his flesh, and beheld him as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

380 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Now in this body he finished the work which his Father gave him to do; he fulfilled all righteousness (the righteousness of the letter, the righteousness of the Spirit) that he might bring *his* through the righteousness of the law or letter, into the righteousness of the Spirit and power, into the righteousness of the new life; and here that scripture is read and fulfilled, *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God.* So his whole life was a doing the will of the Father, which sent him.

When he was but twelve years old, he disputed with the doctors and teachers of the law, hearing and asking them questions (discovering the pure wisdom of the Father which dwelt in him) because it was his Father's business which he was to be about, as he told his mother, *Luke ii. 49.* And when the Lord led him into the wilderness to be tried, he went and was tempted, that he might fight the battle against his great adversary. And when the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, moving him to preach the gospel, he preached the gospel in the Spirit and power of the Father, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, as his Father's Spirit led and guided him: for he did nothing of himself, or in his own will, or for himself; but all in the will and time of the Father.

Mine hour is not yet come, said he to his mother, when she was hasty to have him do that miracle of turning water into wine, *John ii. 4.* And so when his brethren urged him to go up to the feast, *John vii. 3, 4.* *My time,* said he, *is not yet come; your time is always ready,* ver. 5.

Thus he did always please his Father, and seek the honour of him that sent him; and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, being willing to drink of the cup which his Father gave him to drink: and so having finished his work, he returned from whence he came, and sat down at the right-hand of the majesty on high, being exalted above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, both in this world, and in that which is to come.

Thirdly, Now the third appearance of Christ, which these two outward appearances made way for, was his appearance *in Spirit*, even his pure, *inward, heavenly* appearance in the hearts of his children. This he bids his disciples wait for; telling them, *that he would not leave them comfortless, but would come again to them.* They had had the appearance of the bridegroom in the flesh, and he was to go away. It could not be helped; it was necessary for them that he should go away; but (saith he) *I will come again.* The same power and presence that is now with you in a body of flesh, shall visit you in Spirit, and so abide with you for ever. For he that is now with you shall be in you; till that time ye shall have sorrow, and be like a travelling woman; but the world, in the mean time, shall rejoice; *but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you.* And was it not so? Did not Christ send the Spirit, the Comforter? Did he not come in the Spirit and power of the Most High, to be with them always to the end of the world? Did he not bid them *stay and wait at*

Jerusalem

Jerusalem for that appearance of him in his Spirit, and not go about his work and message till he came in the power and authority of his Father to go along with them? And did not their hearts rejoice when he came with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? Had they not then the joy and peace which passed all the understanding of man; which *joy and peace none could take from them*; which joy they were not promised that they should receive till he came and saw them again? Yea, truly; in the kingdom, Spirit, and power of our Lord Jesus Christ there is a *seeing eye to eye*. Yea, it was so, in some measure, with some precious ones in the days of old, which that promise, (*Psal. xxxii. 8. I will guide thee with mine eye*) intimates; for the eye of the soul must be upon God's eye, and observe the motion thereof, if it be guided thereby.

And truly this administration of the Spirit and power of the gospel is exceeding glorious, and they that come into it, come into the glory and heavenly dominion and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (and so are made kings by him, and wear crowns in his presence, though they still cast them at his feet) and are changed from glory to glory; and behold, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, which none can do but with the eye which is in some measure changed and glorified.

Now this dispensation of the gospel in Spirit and power, began in the apostles days, and the church was exceeding chaste, pure, and beautiful then, without spot or wrinkle; though there were some crept into the outward court, which were spots among them; but that did not mar the beauty of the rest, but they could bring victory and dominion to him that sat on the throne, and witnessed that salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ was come. For the man-child was born, and was among them; and the glorious woman (the church, the spouse of Christ) *was clothed with the sun*, &c. and had both her husband (her Lord and head) and the man-child (the pure birth of life) with her. But there was a falling away after this, and a thick dark night, and a very great and universal apostasy from the Spirit and power of the apostles; many departing out of the fear into the high-mindedness, and not keeping their standing in the faith, and love, and obedience of the truth; but holding a form of godliness out of the power.

But God, in his tender mercies, determined to send an angel to preach his everlasting gospel again; and in due time so did, as is expressed, *Rev. xiv. 6, 7.* (Mark: none could preach the everlasting gospel after the apostasy, by any ordination or succession of ministry left amongst men; but there must be a new receiving of the gospel, by a new message and commission from on high). And God likewise sent forth his Spirit of judgment and burning to consume the whore (the false church) which was grown very great, sitting over peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues; and to bring the true church out of the wilderness into enjoyment of her beauty and glory again. And when she comes again, she comes as a morning without clouds, with-

our

382 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Out any veil, without any outward types or shadows of the glory to be revealed; even in the pure and heavenly glory itself.

He that hath a true eye, let him read this; and he that hath an heart opened by the Lord, let him acknowledge it: for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted, and the knees of his redeemed-ones bow to him, and acknowledge him the only Anointed One, the only Lord and King over all, to the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*

XII.

Concerning Mount Sinai, and Mount Sion.

WAS not Sinai the mount that might be touched, an earthly mount, from whence was the ministration of the law outward, or in the letter, which gendered to bondage, condemnation, and death? Doth not the apostle Peter say, concerning the law as so administered, *that it was a yoke too heavy for them or their fathers to bear?* Acts xv. 10.

Is not the gospel Sion a spiritual mount, an heavenly mount, a mount that cannot be touched by human senses, a mount from whence is the ministration of the Spirit, the ministration of liberty, the ministration of life, the ministration of the glory that excelleth? Is it not the holy mountain, whereon the holy city (the New Jerusalem) is built, and where the King of Righteousness rules in righteousness and peace over all his subjects; where he makes to them the feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined; where *he* and *his* sup together, eating and drinking the bread and wine of the kingdom, even the living bread, and the fruit of the living vine?

Is not the whole ministration of life, from the beginning to end, from Mount Sion? Is it, any of it, from Mount Sinai?

Is not Sion to be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness? Doth either the judgment, or the righteousness, wherewith Sion and her converts are to be redeemed, come from Mount Sinai? Do they not both come from Mount Sion?

Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, Isai. ii. He that understandeth this scripture, knoweth the gospel state.

Ye are not come (said the apostle) *to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, &c.; but ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, &c.* Heb. xii.

Now they that are come thither, they witness the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which maketh free from the law of sin and death; and the pure Word of eternal life issuing thence, even from that Sion and Jerusalem.

Mind that scripture, *Gal. iv. 25, 26. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage, with her children; but Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

We read, *Rev. xi. 19. That the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.* Whence did those lightnings, voices, thunderings, &c. issue; out of Sinai, or out of Sion? Doth not the Lion of the tribe of Judah roar out of Sion against his enemies, and shoot the arrows of his judgments from thence? And if he judge his enemies from thence, doth he not judge his people from thence also? Is not his fire in Sion, and his furnace in Jerusalem? And doth not the Spirit of judgment and burning (by which he washeth and purgeth away the blood and filth of the daughter of Sion) issue forth from thence? Oh! that men had a true and spiritual understanding of these things, and were taught of God to know and distinguish concerning the things of his kingdom!

XIII.

Of the Signification of Mount Sinai, and Mount Sion.

MOUNT Sinai was that mount of earth which the voice and presence of the Lord shook at the ministration of the law outward.

Now there is an inward earth, which is to be shaken also; even the nature which transgressed, the nature which was subject to sin, and under the curse, the earth which brings forth briars and thorns. Into the earth the plough of the Lord is to go, to break it up, and overturn it, that there may be a new earth formed, fit to receive the heavenly seed; out of which it may spring, and bring forth fruit to God. Yea, not only the earth, but also the heavens, are to be shaken, yea, and removed too; tho' the shaking of Mount Sinai did not signify that, but only the shaking of the earth. *But yet once more (saith the Lord) I shake not earth only, but also heaven; which signifieth the removing of those things that may be shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

There is that which is changeable, and there is that which is unchangeable. The old earth, and the old heavens, are changeable; the new heavens, and the new earth, are unchangeable. There is a changeable mind, a changeable spirit, a changeable nature, a changeable will, a changeable wisdom, a changeable reason and understanding (which one while goeth this way, and another while that way) a changeable knowledge of God; which man learns not of the Spirit of the Lord, but after a traditional way, and by the search of his own hunting mind, and drinks into that part which is old and earthly. There is man's kindling a fire there, a beating out sparks there, with which he compasseth about and warmeth himself, getting unto himself peace and joy, hope and confidence, &c. But when the Lord appears,

384 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

pears, and his voice is heard (when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth, yea, and the heavens also) all these will be shaken, and fall like untimely figs at the rushing of a mighty wind and terrible tempest.

For the day of the Lord, the day of his pure appearance, the day of the brightness of his rising, will be upon all that is high and lofty; upon all that is proud and lifted up above the pure seed. Every cedar of Lebanon, and oak of Bashan, that is high and lifted up; every high mountain and hill that are lifted up; every high tower, and fenced wall; every ship of Tarshish, and pleasant picture, &c. shall all feel the terror of his majesty: and that alone which is of the pure seed, gathered into the seed, and changed into the nature of the seed, that alone shall stand. Nothing else shall be able to dwell with the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings: so that it may be very well said, *Who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he appeareth?* For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he cometh with his fan in his hand, to fan away the chaff; and shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, to purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, pleasant to the Lord; which none can do but those that are purified by him.

And happy will they be, whose religion and worship in that day will stand the trial, and bear the fire. And oh! blessed for ever be the Lord, who is come near to judgment, and is a swift witness against all deceit and unrighteousness; but a justifier of them whose consciences he has sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

But now, as the Lord taketh away the old, so he bringeth in the new. As he removeth the old earth, and the old heavens, wherein dwelt unrighteousness; so he formeth and bringeth forth the new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

And here the kingdom is known and received, which can never be shaken. Here is the Mount Sion, which shall never be removed; and the Jerusalem, one of whose stakes or cords shall never be plucked up, or broken. Here is the city which hath everlasting foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Blessed are they that come hither, and dwell here; who are not come to the mount that may be touched and shaken, and removed (read inwardly); but to the holy mount of God, and whereon all the buildings of life are raised, and whereon they stand firm for ever.

And all that are herein built up and established can truly say, and sing in spirit, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, and blessed by him shall be the habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness, from this time forth for evermore.* For Jerusalem is now become a quiet habitation, and the king of glory reigneth therein: for the Lord of Hosts, who hath created the new heavens, and the new earth, hath created Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; and they shall be glad, and rejoice, and bless themselves in him, for ever and ever. *Amen, Amen.*

XIV.

Concerning the Temple and Sacrifices under the Gospel.

GOD's temple under the gospel is the light of his Son, the Spirit of his Son, and those souls which are renewed, and built up an habitation for him in the Spirit of his Son, and those bodies in which renewed minds and spirits dwell. God is light, and he dwelleth in light; God is Spirit, and his building is holy and spiritual; for he dwelleth in nothing that is dark, or corrupt, or unclean.

And that which is sacrificed or offered up to God must be clean and pure. No unclean thought, no unclean desire, nothing that is earthly, or fleshly, or selfish, must be offered up to God; but the pure breathings of his own Spirit: for whatsoever is of him, and comes from him, is accepted with him; but whatever man can invent, or form, or offer up of his own, or of himself (though it be ever so glorious and taking in man's eye), yet it is but abomination in the sight of the Lord.

Thus all the sacrifices of the Gentiles (or heathenish nature) are rejected. Thus all the sacrifices of the Jews outward (or of the professing mind and nature, without the true life) are rejected also.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord (said the prophet of the Lord of old) and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression; the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Mic. vi. 6, 7.

What saith the answer of God? No, no; this is not the way to come to pardon of sin, or to acceptance with the Lord; but come to that which teacheth what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee, O man; which is to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with the Lord. Come thither in the teachings of God's Spirit, and worship there, and there thou shalt witness forgiveness of sins, and acceptance with the Lord, *Mic. vi. 7, 8.* and *Isai. i. 16, 17, 18.* For it was not offering sacrifices of old (appointed under the law) that would do the thing, nor mens pleading the sacrifice under the gospel; but coming to that Spirit which teacheth holiness, and being subject to that Spirit, and offering in that Spirit (to the Father) what proceeds therefrom. So that his building in the Spirit is the only temple, and the sacrifices or offerings in the Spirit are the only offerings of the New-Testament.

And here every groan or sigh towards the Lord after that which is pure, every supplication in the Spirit, every acknowledgment of the goodness of the Lord in a true and pure sense, are of a sweet savour in the nostrils of the Lord: yea, using hospitality, relieving the poor, or doing any thing that is good from the good and holy root, are sacrifices acceptable to the

386 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Lord. Read these scriptures following (and if the Lord open thine eyes, thou mayest thereby come to see both what the temple and sacrifices are), 1 Cor. iii. 16, and 2 Cor. vi. 16. *Isai.* x. 7. 15. *Ephes.* ii. 21, 22. *Heb.* iii. 6. *Rev.* xxi. 22. *John* iv. 23. *Psal.* xc. 1. These places foregoing are for the temple: then for the sacrifices, *Psal.* l. 14, 15. and li. 16, 17. and cxli. 2. *Mal.* i. 11. *Heb.* x. 8, 9. *Rom.* xii. 1. 1 Cor. xi. 19, 20. 1 *Pe.* ii. 5. *Heb.* xiii. 15. *Phil.* iv. 18.

XV.

Some Questions concerning the Light of CHRIST'S Spirit answered, according to the Testimony of the Scriptures of Truth, and according to Experience.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the message which Christ sent his apostles to declare, whom he sent to preach the gospel?

Ans. This is the message which they heard of him, and which they declared unto others, *That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

Quest. 2. What was Christ's intent in sending them with this message; and for what end were they to declare it to others?

Ans. For the opening of mens eyes and hearts, that men might come to a sight and sense of the darkness, and to a sight and sense of the light; and might be turned from darkness to light (and so from Satan's power to God); and might come out of the one into the other (that is, out of the darkness into the light), and so might walk in the light, as God is in the light.

Quest. 3. What is the danger of abiding in darkness?

Ans. In the darkness is sin, death, condemnation, and destruction of the soul, and separation from God and Christ for ever.

Quest. 4. What is the benefit of being turned to the light, and of coming into the light, and walking in the light, as God is in the light?

Ans. The benefits are great and many; three whereof I may now mention, which comprehend and contain in them many more.

First, In the light, remission of sins is received; for there is the blood of sprinkling, wherewith those are sprinkled that come thither; and indeed none can walk and abide there, but they come to witness the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleansing them from all sin; and true, real cleansing is no-where else witnessed.

Secondly, They have fellowship with the Father and the Son; and come also into fellowship with the saints in light; which are great mysteries, and none knows what they mean but such as are in that holy fellowship.

Thirdly, They there receive the earnest of the everlasting inheritance, and the sealing up by God's Holy Spirit unto the day of full redemption.

Quest. 5. Where is the darkness which men are to be turned from?

Ans.

Ans. It is within, chiefly within; there is Satan's kingdom; there is the house, which the *strong man armed* keepeth; where his goods are in peace, till a *stronger* than he cometh to trouble and dispossess him.

Quest. 6. How or where is the light to be met with which man is to be turned to?

Ans. It appears within also; it shines in the darkness: for thither Christ (the stronger) comes, with the light of his Spirit, to overcome and dispossess the strong man of his house and kingdom.

Quest. 7. When doth the light of Christ's Spirit shine in the darkness of man's heart?

Ans. When, and as God pleaseth. For the light is his, and he causeth it to shine (in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men) according to his pleasure; and therefore men are to wait for the shining of his pure heavenly light in their hearts, that with it the darkness may be resisted, overcome, and subdued in them, and scattered and dispelled from them, and their hearts filled with the light and power of life.

Quest. 8. How may a man perceive or know the light when it shines?

Ans. By its shining: for light (both outward and inward) manifests both itself and other things by its own shining. And as there is no discerning the things of this world but by the light of the world; so there is no discerning the things of the other world but by the light of the other world; that is, there is no discerning spiritual things but by the light and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God causeth to shine in the heart; which light searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, and discovereth the most hidden things there.

Object. But the heart is deceitful above all things, and Satan can transform himself into the likeness of an angel of light; so that he shines inwardly too by his feigned appearances: how then may I know the shinings of the true light of Christ's Spirit in my heart, from his false shinings and transformings?

Ans. God hath a witness in mens consciences: For as God hath not left himself without witness outwardly, but all his works testify of him (his works of goodness, love, mercy, power, &c. testify of his goodness, love, mercy, power, &c.); so he hath not left himself without witness inwardly; but there is somewhat in men to testify of God, and for God, and against his enemy, and all deceitful appearances; which witness always speaketh faithfully, and testifieth truth.

Therefore he that cometh to discern that, and mind that, shall find that near him which will always witness for God upon every occasion, and against all the appearances and devices of the enemy.

Now no man can come to discern or distinguish in cases of this nature, but as that which is of God, and for God, gives the judgment in him; and he that judgeth thus shall never judge according to the shews and appearances of things, but shall still judge the true and righteous judgment.

388 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Quest. 9. *What is the nature and properties of the light of Christ's Spirit; and what will it do in the hearts of those that turn to it, receive it, and walk in it?*

Ans. It hath a most excellent nature and properties, and it will work wonderfully in the hearts of those that receive it, and walk in it towards the redeeming and saving them from sin, and the powers of darkness: so that following this light, and abiding and walking in it, they cannot be overcome by the enemy of their souls; but must needs conquer and overcome him. To instance in some:

First, It hath an enlightening or manifesting property. It will discover all that is of God, and likewise all that is against him. It will discover the very mystery of death, and the most subtil workings of the enemy in the mystery of darkness, and deceivableness of unrighteousness. And it will discover the mystery of life, and the mystery of the way of holiness. So that not only the precepts of holiness, but the way of the precepts, the way of obeying the holy will and Spirit of God in every thing, is here learned.

Secondly, It hath an awakening property. This light will not let a man sleep in sin, or grow heavy and dull (if he hearken to it); but it awakens him that sleeps: and whoever is truly awakened at any time, is awakened by this light; by the shining thereof in his heart; by the manifestation of God to his spirit by it. This testimony Paul gives, *Ephes. v. 13, 14. Whatsoever doth make manifest is light.* Wherefore he saith, *Awake, thou that sleepest, &c.*

Thirdly, It hath a quickening property. For it is the light of life, the light of Christ's Spirit, which is living and powerful; and it hath life and power in it, and quickeneth and raiseth the man to whom it reacheth, and giveth him ability to arise from the dead.

Fourthly, It hath a cleansing, a sanctifying, a purifying property. Oh! how clean it makes within! The light is pure, and it maketh pure. All the defilement and corruption is in the darkness; none of it is in the light; but the light purgeth it away, where it findeth entertainment.

Fifthly, It hath an uniting and separating property. It unites to God; it unites to that which is pure; and it separates from sin, Satan, darkness, and whatever is impure.

Sixthly, It hath a preserving nature and property. It preserves the man in whom it dwells; and where it hath power, and rules, it keeps out the darkness; so that darkness cannot break in where it hath place, and is kept to: nor can the mind break out from the Lord, which keeps in the sense, favour, and seasoning of the light of his Spirit.

Indeed time would fail me, to speak of the excellent nature, virtues, and properties thereof; but come, taste, and see how sweet the light is, and what a pleasant thing it is to behold the shinings of this Sun.

Quest.

Quest. 10. *Doth God visit all men with this light?*

Answ. Yes; as God loveth all men, and would have all men saved, so he visiteth all men (more or less) with that which is able to discover the darkness to them, and to save them therefrom.

Quest. 11. *What is the reason then that all men are not saved by it?*

Answ. Because they do not receive it, and join to it against the darkness; but join to the darkness, and hearken to the wisdom and reasonings thereof, against the appearances and discoveries of the light.

Quest. 12. *How comes it that men do so?*

Answ. From their love to the darkness and to the deeds of darkness; which they know they should not love, because they have somewhat near them, which often shews them the evil, both of the darkness that is in them, and of the deeds that come from it. So that this is the condemnation, that men love the darkness, cleave to the darkness, and follow the darkness; but hate the light, and turn from the light, which in the love and mercy of God follows them, to bring them out of love with the darkness, and to bring them into the sense of, and fellowship with him in the light.

Quest. 13. *How come some to love the light?*

Answ. God affords a capacity therein to all, and God is Love; and from the flowings of his love, and aboundings of his mercy to all, are men begotten to him; and the obedient are kept by him in subjection to that, which many resisting the strivings of his Spirit with them, are finally given up to hardness of heart, who turn from and hate the light. So that to God and his grace is to be attributed the salvation of all that are saved; and to man, his own destruction and perishing from the way of life, notwithstanding the tender visitations of God, to recover and reconcile man to himself, through the blood of his Son.

Quest. 14. *Against whom do they rebel, that rebel against the light?*

Answ. They rebel against Christ, from whom the light comes; and will Christ save such as rebel against him? Oh! that men did aright consider this thing! for it is a greater matter to know, and be subject to the light of Christ's Spirit, as it shines from him in the heart, than men are aware of. Now that which discovers the hidden things of darkness in the heart, and reproves for it, is the light of Christ's Spirit, and not another. Oh! that all that desire to know what and where the true light is, did understand so!

Quest. 15. *What do they miss of, who do not know nor heed the light of Christ's Spirit, nor mind the reproofs thereof in their hearts, but look on it as inferior in kind and nature to what it is?*

Answ. They miss of many great and precious privileges, which they that know it and have received it, and so walk in it, and are subject to it, do experience and are acquainted with.

First, They miss of knowing the ways of it: for in this light there are ways or paths of holiness, paths of life, paths of righteousness, paths of peace,

390 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

peace, paths of joy, paths of refreshment and consolation, wherein all these things are daily met with by those that walk there; which they that know not the light (or rebel against the light) are not acquainted with. See *Job* xxiv. 13.

Secondly, They miss of the lighting of their candle by it: for God lights his candle in the heart by this light, and by no other thing; so that in this his light, they whose candle is lighted by him, see light.

David had experience of this, and from that experience spake, *Thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness*, *Psal.* xviii. 28. And *Job* had experience of this also, as those words of his plainly signify, *Job* xxix. 2, &c. where he saith, *Oh! that I were as in the days past, when his candle shined upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness.* And all the children of God, who in this day wait for the shinings of the light of his Spirit in their hearts, and are subject to him therein, they experience the same, and know the Word of life (which is nigh in the mouth and heart) to be a *lanthorn to the feet, and a light to the paths*, of the lowest and meanest here.

Thirdly, They miss of the sending forth, or revelation of that from God, which leads to his holy hill and to his tabernacles, which David experienced and desired more of, *Psal.* xliii. 3. For, *who shall dwell in God's holy hill, or abide in his tabernacle?* *Psal.* xv. 1. *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, &c. he shall never be moved,* ver. 2. to the end, and *Isai.* xxxiii. 15, &c. But how shall any come thither? Surely by God's light and truth sent forth from his Spirit into their spirits. This is the way of ascending thither in all ages and generations.

Fourthly, They slight that measure of light given them, and despise the day of small things, and therefore miss of the pouring forth of God's Spirit upon them, which is plentifully poured forth upon the sons and daughters of the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem, in this day of God's visiting the earth again after the apostasy; blessed be the name of the Lord! And how comes it to be poured forth upon them? How comes wisdom to pour out her spirit unto them? Why; they hearken to her reproofs, turning thereat, and forsaking that which they are reprov'd for, and so come into wisdom's fear; and then wisdom opens her secrets, and pours out her spirit, and makes known her words to those that are subject to her reproofs and learn her fear, which is the fear of the New Covenant. See *Prov.* i. 23. *He that receiveth the convincer of sin, and followeth his leadings, out of the sins he is convinced of (and into the paths of righteousness and holiness, into which he is the leader) cannot miss of the Comforter, or of his comforts; for he is one and the same with the convincer or reprover.*

XVI.

The Way to know one's Election, and to be fully assured of it; as also concerning Election itself.

DAVID saith, *the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself*, Psal. iv. This is God's choice. God is the great potter, who formeth vessels upon the wheel of his power; some to honour, some to dishonour, but not before they were. Some he melteth and tendereth for salvation, who hearken to his voice; others he hardeneth and giveth up for destruction, who rebel against his Spirit. Oh! how should all fear before him, who hath power over them, as the potter over the clay, that they should reverence and obey him, lest his power break them to pieces!

Now this is most certain: the holy man, the righteous man, the godly man, he that is renewed in the spirit of his mind; this is a vessel of honour, fitted and chosen by God unto honour: but he that is corrupt, dead, filthy, polluted, &c. this is the vessel which God rejects. For the righteous God loveth righteousness for ever, and the holy God loveth holiness for ever; and he that is holy and righteous, is of him, and chosen by him: but all that is unholy and unrighteous, is of another nature and spirit, and so rejected and cast out by his pure nature and Spirit.

Therefore every one that would be accepted of the Lord and witness his choice, is to mind that, and be subject to that, whereby God fitteth vessels for himself; which is the Holy Spirit, nature, and life of his Son, wherein every man is accepted (as he is called thither, gathered thither, and found there) and none rejected: but out of this every man is rejected, but none accepted; *for God is no respecter of persons.*

He carried himself equally to every Jew under the old covenant; and he carrieth himself equally towards all who obey the call of his Spirit into the new and living covenant; so that the truth standeth for ever, that in every nation, tongue and people, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him, and none else. And this is the great mercy and tender love of God to all men, that which bringeth into his fear, and teacheth and enableth to work righteousness, is near every man, which is the word of faith, the word of life, the word of power, the word of reconciliation; so that no man need go far to seek out salvation: for Christ, the Saviour and salvation of God, is nigh to every man, in the light of that Holy Spirit of truth wherewith God visiteth mankind, and wherein he speaketh peace and reconciliation, both to them that are nigh, and to them that are afar off, as they hear the voice of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and learn subjection to it.

Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, said the apostle Peter, 2 Pet. i. 10. How shall we do that, may some say? *Why, give all diligence*

392 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness love: for if these things be in you and abound, ye cannot be barren in the knowledge of Christ, but must needs be fruitful. Well, but what then? What if they be fruitful? Why, if they be fruitful, then (to be sure) they are chosen branches; for God casts off none but that which is dry, barren, dead, and unfruitful. Feel life, which is active and bears fruit, thou feelest the choice of God, thou answerest the end of thy call, &c. and herein as thou comest to settlement and establishment, thou wilt find thy calling and election made sure to thee, and an entrance ministered to thee abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For Christ hath the key of the kingdom, and shutteth out no such as these, but giveth them further admittance day by day. And so by this means thou wilt witness translation further and further, out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and an inheritance and possession of life and glory in measure; which will be an earnest to thee of the full inheritance in due time, and a seal upon thy heart unto the day of full redemption: yea, thou mayest then also come to see how thou wast loved and chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, through obedience unto, and sanctification of the Spirit, manifested in time, *2 Thess.* ii. 13. (For known unto God are all his works from the beginning, before ever any of them were wrought.) If thou feel that which cometh forth from the Lord to call and gather to him, and to renew and sanctify, and make fit for him, and to make thee fruitful (from the holy root and power of life) in that which is good; this is enough for thee, and thy soul is safe and blessed here: for here thou knowest that, and art in that blessed seed of promise, into which all that are gathered and abide, are blessed in and with it.

Now as concerning election itself, observe this; that it is in Christ, and not out of him. For it was the intent of God to honour his Son, even as his Son honoured him: and this was the honour which God gave him, *That he should be his salvation to the ends of the earth; that whosoever believed on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* That he should be the way for all mankind to come to the Father, through faith in him; *that as in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive;* and as in Adam all men were shut up in death and condemnation, so the free gift might come upon all, and the way of life and redemption be opened to all, in him.

Mind the figure, the brazen serpent, which was not lifted up that a certain number might be healed, and no more; but that every one that was wounded, every one that was stung with serpents, might look up and be healed.

So was Christ lifted up, that every sinner that was stung with sin and the serpent, might look up to the physician of souls, and receive virtue and healing from him, according to that precious scripture, *Look unto me, and be ye*

ye saved, all the ends of the earth. And whoever is a-thirst, let him come; and whoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely. Yea, God stands ready, by his Holy Spirit and quickening power, which is near men, to kindle the true thirst in them, and to make them truly willing. To open it yet further;

There is predestination, election, calling, justifying, glorifying: predestination unto holiness, election in that which is holy, calling out of darkness into light, justifying and glorifying in the light, through the renewing and sanctification of the Spirit. All these God ordereth and manageth according to his good will, and according as he hath purposed in himself; although he be not the decreer, nor author of sin or rebellion against himself, which is the cause of the creature's condemnation.

Thus all things are as present with God before they were: for God did foreknow Adam's fall (though he was not therefore the author of it) before it came to pass; and he foreknew how his power, and love, and mercy, should work towards men and for men, in and through Christ; and how far he would visit men therewith, and how far men would resist and strive against his Holy and good Spirit; and he determined how long his Spirit should strive with nations and persons: for with some he would long wait to be gracious; with others he would be quicker and more severe, according to their provocations.

Now his love, his mercy, his power, his good Spirit, are his own; and he may shew forth the operations of them towards men according to his pleasure; and who may say unto him, What dost thou? May he not do with his own what he pleaseth (who is *good and righteous in all his ways*)? and because he may shew mercy as long as he will, and harden as soon as he will (as he sees cause). May it not be truly said, *That he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will, he hardeneth?* But that he hardeneth any, without first giving them a day of mercy and visitations of mercy, following them with mercy, and forbearing them in mercy, and so by the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, leading them to repentance, that they might escape his wrath, and the dread of his powerful vengeance, because of sin: I say, that God hardens any before he hath dealt thus with them, from a meer will in himself, because he would destroy the most and far greatest part of men; this the scriptures no-where testify to, but abundantly testify against. For how long did God strive with the old world, even to have saved them, whom afterwards he did destroy? And how did he strive with that people of the Jews (yea, and with other nations also, though they might seem cast off)? *As I live, saith the Lord* (and he speaketh his heart), *I desire not the death of the wicked, but rather that they might return and live. I am not the destroyer, I am the Saviour; and my delight is not to destroy, but to save.* O Israel! *thy destruction is of thyself; but in me is thy help.* And no man's blood will lie at God's door but at his own.

394 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Therefore as God hath prepared a Saviour, so there is no want of love, or mercy, or power on his part, to draw men to the Saviour; but this is the condemnation, that men harden themselves against the drawings of his Spirit, and against the operation of his holy light and power, when it appeareth, and is willing to work in and upon their hearts. This is not the condemnation of men, that light doth not shine in their hearts; but that they love the darkness more than the light, which appears and shines in them, and is there witnessing against and drawing from the darkness. And so when it shall at last be made manifest, how light hath appeared to all men, and God's Spirit therein, and thereby striven with all men, and how they have refused, and would not be turned from their darkness to the light of the Lord; every mouth will be stopped before him, and all men that perish, justly condemned for refusing and neglecting so great salvation: for the light of the sun of God's everlasting day, and the sound of his Spirit of life, visiting dark man, reacheth throughout all the earth, and his voice and words to the ends of the world.

XVII.

Some Observations concerning the Priesthood of CHRIST, from several Passages in the Epistle to the HEBREWS.

Observ. 1. **W**HO is the apostle and high-priest of our profession? It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom God hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds; and who is the express image of his Father's substance, &c. *Heb. i. and chap. iii. 1.*

Observ. 2. Why this high-priest was to suffer death? which was, that he might taste death for every man, and so through suffering become a perfect Saviour, or perfect captain of salvation, to all the sons that were to be brought by him to glory, *chap. ii. 9, 10.*

Observ. 3. Why he partook of flesh and blood? one reason whereof was, because the children (and that therein he might shew them an example of righteousness, that he might condemn himself in the flesh), were partakers of flesh and blood; for that was the very ground or reason that he took part of the same: another reason was that which was mentioned before; that he might taste death, and through death destroy him who had the power of death, and so break open the prison-doors, and deliver those who were captives under him, *chap. ii. 14, 15.*

Observ. 4. Why he was tempted; and why in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren? which was, *that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* For his own suffering under temptations (even the sense thereof) renders him merciful, tender, faithful, and ready to help and succour his in all their temptations, *chap. ii. 17, 18.*

Mark;

Mark; Christ was not only to die, and so offer up a sacrifice of atonement, but he was also to make reconciliation by it ever afterwards for his children (in case of transgression) whenever occasion should be. So saith John, *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father* (to plead for the forgiving and blotting out of the sin); *and he is the propitiation (or reconciliation) for our sins*; as the old translation renders it, *1 John ii. 1, 2.*

Observ. 5. Christ, our apostle and high-priest, is as faithful over all his house as Moses was over his. There is not one of the children, not one of his family, but he will teach: not one soul belonging to him, but he will succour, being tempted; nor any one, but he will be an advocate and reconciliation for (in case of sin), in and according to the way that God hath appointed, *Heb. iii. 2.*

Observ. 6. Who are Christ's house? over whom is he an apostle and high-priest? It is over his own house; whose house are all such as are called by him, if they receive and hold fast that which gives a right to him, and interest in him, *chap. iii. 6. and ver. 14.* For as under the law, the high-priest was priest only over the outward Israel, the Jews natural; so under the gospel, Christ is appointed of God high-priest over the inward Jews, the Jews spiritual.

Observ. 7. How this apostle or high-priest of our profession doth work in the hearts of his family or household? which is by the Word of Life, by the Word of his own eternal power, which pierceth deep, and divideth between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning and judging every thought and intent, and bringing every high reasoning and imagination into captivity, that the heart, soul, mind and spirit, with all the thoughts and intents thereof, may become subject to his Spirit and power, *chap. iv. 12.*

Observ. 8. What an advantage we have, by having such an high-priest (as was tempted like us, and touched with the sense of our infirmities) of coming boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need! For he who experimentally knew what the weakness of our flesh is, and what it was to be tempted therein, and how needful and seasonable help from his Father then was; surely he cannot but be ready to give out, and multiply grace and mercy to his in the time of their need, *chap. iv. 15, 16.*

Observ. 9. How Christ came to be an high-priest? which was not by his own taking the honour to himself, but by God's glorifying him with the call thereto, *chap. v. 4, 5.*

Observ. 10. How God fitted Christ, and made him a perfect high-priest? which was by preparing for him a body of flesh, and exercising him in the days of his flesh with many trials and temptations; and at last with a bitter baptism, and cup of death, in which he felt and bare the griefs and sorrows of his people, and cried mightily to his Father, and was heard in that he feared: and so having himself perfectly learned obedience to his Father, he knows how to become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him. For Christ, who was heard and saved from death in his obedience to his Father, is appointed to be the leader and Saviour of his people, to save and

396 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

redeem them in their obedience unto him, the leader into, and in the way and paths of life, *chap. v. 7, 8, 9.*

Observ. 11. Where Christ mediates for his people? which is within the veil, in the heavenly place, in the holiest of all, where the anchor of our hope reacheth to him and fasteneth upon him, and there remains sure and stedfast; so that we are stayed upon him, the rock of life and power, against all the storms and tempests of the powers of darkness, both inward and outward, *chap. vi. 19, 20.*

Observ. 12. After what order Christ was made an high-priest; which was after the order of Melchizedeck, who was king of righteousness, and king of peace, even after an holy and heavenly order: not after the order of the earthly priesthood, the high-priests whereof were taken from amongst men, but after his order who was made mention of; without father, without mother, without descent (for who can declare his generation?) without beginning of days or end of life, *chap. vii. 1, 2, 3. and 15.*

Observ. 13. That this priest put an end to and changed the laws of the other earthly, shadowy priesthood of Levi, by which perfection was not, that he might bring in that priesthood of his own, by which perfection was to be, *chap. vii. ver. 11, &c.*

Observ. 14. How Christ was made priest after a different manner from the priests of the law: for they were made priests after the law of a carnal commandment; but Christ was not made priest so, but after the power of an endless life, *chap. vii. 16.*

Observ. 15. That the work of Christ's priesthood continueth until it be finished; that is, till this high-priest hath saved all whom he is to save, which is thus: as in all ages the Father draweth souls to him, so he is to save them; to destroy their enemies, to blot out their sins, to break down what stands between God and them, and so to bring them into the true oneness; for God will never be reconciled to his enemy the devil, nor to man while in union with him, *chap. vii. 24, 25.*

Observ. 16. That this high-priest needeth not to offer many sacrifices to atone by, as the priests under the law needed to do often: for he was a perfect priest, and offered up one perfect, spotless sacrifice; and is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, *chap. vii. 27, 28.*

Observ. 17. What sanctuary is Christ the high-priest and minister of? which is, of that sanctuary and true tabernacle which the Lord pitcheth, and not man, *chap. viii. 2.*

Observ. 18. What he hath to offer? for every high-priest was ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices. He hath the heavenly gifts and sacrifices to offer; even all the gifts and spiritual sacrifices that are revived and brought forth by him in the holy place, even in his temple or spiritual house within the veil; he is to offer them all up to his Father, *ver. 3, &c.*

Observ. 19. What covenant he is mediator of? even a better covenant than the priests under the law were mediators of, which is established upon better promises: a covenant, wherein there is no defectiveness or imperfection, wherein

wherein all shall certainly be redeemed and saved by him, who come to him in the drawing of the Father, and abide with him. For in such God will put his laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and *will be their God, and they shall be his people*; and will so teach them, that they shall need no other teacher; but shall all know him from the least to the greatest. For as men come into this covenant, God will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will he remember no more, *ver. 6. to the end.*

Observ. 20. That Christ is not an high-priest of the figures of things, but of the good things themselves (which came in the time of reformation), even of the perfect covenant, the perfect tabernacle, and of the worship and service in Spirit and truth; where the perfect refiner (by his Spirit of judgment and burning) purifieth the sons of Levi, that they may offer to God an offering in righteousness, *chap. ix. 9, 10, 11. and Mal. iii. 3.*

So that there is a different state witnessed by the people of God in this covenant, from what was witnessed by the Jews in the other covenant: for what was amiss there, is reformed here by the Spirit and power of our God, in all those that abide and walk in this covenant; who live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, and do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, which grieve and provoke God's Holy Spirit.

Observ. 21. How Christ came to obtain eternal redemption for all his? which was by his blood. For as the high-priest under the law entered into the holy place of that tabernacle made with hands, by the blood of goats and calves, and so obtained remission for the sins of that outward people the Jews; so Christ entered into the truly holy place, into the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and there by his blood obtained remission for all that should receive repentance from him, and believe in him, *ver. 11, 12.*

Observ. 22. How Christ purifieth, purgeth, and sanctifieth the people with his blood? which is, by sprinkling it upon them. For under the law, in that outward covenant, the unclean were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice, that they might be sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; and under the gospel, in this inward covenant, believers are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, that their consciences might be purged from dead works to serve the living God, as his cleansed, holy, renewed people, *ver. 13, 14.*

Observ. 23. For what cause Christ was mediator of the New Testament? which was, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressors under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, *ver. 15.* For God hath made Christ a propitiation for all men, both Jews and Gentiles, that through faith in his blood, his righteousness might be declared for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, that he might be just, and a justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus, *Rom. iii. 15, 16.* So that they that were under the first covenant, hearkening unto him, and believing in him, were justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, *Act. xiii. 39.*

Observ.

398 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Observ. 24. The necessity of Christ's death, which was, because he was to make way by his own blood into the holiest, to appear before God for us; and to sprinkle the heavenly things with the blood of a sacrifice, of an higher and better nature than the blood of bulls and goats was; for that was the blood of the covenant, which was to pass away, but he was to sprinkle his with the blood of the everlasting covenant; and by this his death and blood (sprinkled upon the hearts of his) his covenant comes to be of force, *ver. 16. to 25. and chap. xiii. 20, 21.*

Observ. 25. That this high-priest need not often offer sacrifices, to put away sin, as the priests of the law did; because this one offering is sufficient, and the blood thereof sprinkled upon the conscience, is able to purge away dead works, wherever it is sprinkled. There needeth not any other offering, nor any other blood to do it; but all that is now further needed, or to be expected by *his*, is his appearing the *second* time, without sin, unto salvation, in the pure virtue, power, and life of his own Spirit, *ver. 25. to the end.*

Observ. 26. What it was, that was the thing of great value with the Father, in Christ giving up himself to death? It was his obedience. He did obey his Father in all things, not doing his own will, but the will of him that sent him. *He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross:* and so, as by one man's disobedience, death came upon all; so by the obedience of *one*, the free gift came upon all, which free gift is unto life; for life comes upon all that come to him, and believe in him, through the free gift, which is freely tendered to, and come upon all; *Rom. v. 18, 19.*

Observ. 27. That God took away sacrifices, and burnt-offerings, which were appointed by the old covenant, that he might establish this obedience among all his children. Christ led the way, and all are to follow him in the new obedience, and to walk in newness of Spirit before the Lord, *ver. 9.*

Observ. 28. That we are sanctified by the same will, by which Christ was sanctified, or sanctifieth himself. In subjection to the same will, which the head obeyed (even in denying themselves, taking up the cross to their own wills, and submitting to God's) are the members sanctified. The Spirit of God works them into holiness by this will of God, and through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once, *ver. 10. John xvii. 19.*

So mark: there is the will of God, the offering up the body of Jesus, the pouring out the Spirit of grace, the new covenant, and faith in Christ, &c. All these tend to work out one and the same thing, and they all concur thereto, in their several orders and places.

Observ. 29. That as this high-priest sanctifies men, so he perfects them; and when they are fully sanctified, then they are for-ever perfected; but till then, Christ, the high-priest of our profession, hath somewhat to do upon them towards the perfecting of them, that he may present them spotless, and blameless to his Father, *ver. 14, 15.*

Observ.

Observ. 30. How the apostle proves, *That by this one offering, Christ hath far-over perfected them that are sanctified.* He proves it thus: by this offering the covenant is established, wherein is the putting and writing God's law in the heart and mind, the remission of sins.

So, come into this covenant, come under this high-priest; there is no more remembering of sin there, but perfect forgiveness through this one offering, and so no more need of any more sacrificing or offering for sins to such, *ver. 15.—19.* For *he shall sprinkle many nations with the blood of this one offering,* Isa. lii. 15.

Observ. 31. The great privilege of those, who do indeed believe in Christ, and are sprinkled with the blood, and how they are to improve and make use of that privilege.

First, They have liberty, confidence, or boldness, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, *ver. 19.* What is more holy than God's Spirit? Is not that the most holy place? Why, there *they* are to worship; for they that worship the Father in the new covenant, or according to the new covenant, must worship him in the Spirit, and in the truth; yea, and must also live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, which is the place of everlasting rest, and land of the living.

Secondly, Take notice how they come into the holiest, which is by the new and living way, which Christ hath prepared, or consecrated through his flesh, *ver. 20.*

Thirdly, They have an high-priest there over the house of God, who appears before God in the holiest, and stands ready there to perform all the offices of priest-hood for his household, *ver. 21.*

Fourthly, There is an orderly way of drawing nigh to God, and worshipping him in the holiest? There is a certain manner, after which believers are to approach, and draw nigh to God: which is; 1. With a true heart. 2. In fullness of faith, or in full assurance of faith; not waveringly, but as those that are called of God, and shall be helped by him, and accepted of him through their high-priest. 3. In purity of conscience and conversation, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water, *ver. 22, 23.* and *Psal. xxvi. 6.* *Christ came by water and blood;* so here is both the water and the blood, according to the figures thereof, under the law.

Observ. 32. Whither they came in the apostles days, who knew Christ as their high-priest and mediator, and who partook of the blood of sprinkling? They came to spiritual Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, *Heb. xii. 22.*

Observe likewise where they walked, who felt the virtue of Christ's blood cleansing them; which was *in the light, as God is in the light,* 1 John i. 7.

Now, what light is that which the redeemed are to walk in? Is it not the light of the Lamb's city, the new Jerusalem? Is it not the light thereof, that

400 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

that the nations of them that are saved must walk in? *Rev. xxi. 24.* Yea, this light, this city, and the holy waters of the sanctuary, which flow and stream from the river of life there, were in measure known and experienced in the days of old, which David prayed for, and experienced a sense of, *Psal. xliii. 3. and xlv. 4.* Yea, he knew also the blood of the everlasting covenant, praying and waiting to be sprinkled and cleansed therewith, *Psal. li. 6.* For he looked through the outward figure, to what his soul needed to purge and wash it inwardly; which outward hyssop, or outward water of purification, he knew would not do; for he that saw through the outward sacrifices, to the inward, could not chuse but see through these also.

But that power, virtue, and life of God's Spirit, which could *create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit in him*, and bring him into God's presence, where he might feel the upholdings of his free Spirit, and partake of the joy of God's salvation and deliverance from that which had defiled him; this was it he prayed for; knowing assuredly, he should here meet with the true hyssop, and water of life, and blood of the covenant, which purgeth the heart and conscience from dead works, and maketh it whiter than the snow in God's sight, *ver. 10, 11, 12.* For he that delighted not in sacrifice, nor burnt-offerings, neither could he delight in hyssop, or water, or blood, outward or natural; but in that which melteth the heart, and purifieth the conscience, from that which is dead and unclean, in that is God's delight; and in that which is melted, broken, and purified by it, *ver. 16, 17.*

Observ. Lastly, That there is a sin unto death, a kind of sinning for which there is no sacrifice (but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, to destroy and devour the adversaries, *ver. 26, 27.*), which is a wilful despising this covenant; which he that doth, must die without mercy; as he that despised Moses's law did, *ver. 28, 29.* For the Lord will revenge this sin, wheresoever he finds it; and such shall know, that it is a *fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, when he comes to judge them, *ver. 30, 31.*

XVIII.

A brief Relation of the Estate or Condition the Lord found many of us in, when he came to visit us, and make known to us the blessed Ministration of his Spirit and Power, and of some of his Dealings with us, in instructing and nurturing us up therein; with a few Words of Exhortation.

THERE are chambers of imagery in many people; and strong-holds, and reasonings, and imaginations, and high thoughts, exalted above the pure seed and measure of life in their hearts. For every true Christian, every

every true believer, hath received somewhat of Christ's Spirit, some proportion of grace and truth from the fullness of Christ, which is as leaven and salt, to leaven the heart, and season the mind and spirit with.

But all do not distinctly know this, nor are all that do know it subject to it; so that this doth not lead, and command, and rule in all; but there is somewhat which holds captive, and the enemy of the soul hath the rule and dominion in many mens spirits, professing godliness; whereby the seed is kept under in them, and their souls kept back from that redemption and deliverance, which they should partake of, in and with the seed. So many talk of the gospel (and speak great words of Christ, and redemption by him) who know not *immortality brought to light*, nor the dead raised by it, to live to God and praise his name.

Now in these chambers of imagery, in these strong-holds, there are many pleasant pictures, many images of the heavenly things, which men form in their minds, from their own apprehendings and conceivings upon the scriptures. For men reading the scriptures, not in the life, Spirit, and power which gave them forth, but with that which is natural, they come not to the true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge; but only obtain a natural knowledge, according to which they believe and worship; and so fall down before, and according to, the apprehensions and imaginations of their own minds; and so one believes and worships one way, and another believes and worships another way. And truly, here men worship they know not what; but they that are the true Jews, know what they worship; for salvation is of the true Jews, who worship neither at this mountain, nor at the other mountain; but only in Spirit, and in truth, even in the life and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus it is with all men in their several professions of religion in the darkness, in the apostasy from the true life and power, which all sorts have erred and wandered from, but few have returned to. Ah! few have found the pearl of price, which hath been long lost; but have contented themselves with a literal relation and knowledge concerning the pearl, without knowing and possessing the pearl itself. Yea, indeed, this was the state of darkness the Lord found us all in, when he came to visit us; for the strong man armed had his strong-holds in us, whereby he held us in the bands of death, and kept us captive, and free from that righteous life and power which we thirsted after. But when the stronger than he came, he battered his strength, he assaulted and took his strong-holds; he brake all his reasonings, knowledge, wisdom, and subtilty, wherein he trusted, and made spoil of his goods, and delivered the captives from under his hand.

For, indeed, when the mighty day of the Lord came upon us, and his pure heavenly light shone in our hearts, God searched Jerusalem as with candles, discovering the most hidden things of Esau's nature inwardly; and then all the knowledge and wisdom, all the understanding and experiences, which were treasured up in us out of the pure life, out of the truth, which

402 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

lives and abides, they were found dead, and condemned as dead in us, and so cast forth, as the treasures of Egypt and Babylon, and thrown to the bats and moles; who either creep up and down in the earthly nature, or soar aloft in the dark dreams and imaginations of the night of darkness and apostasy.

For when the true light shines, it discovers what the day is, and what the night is; and the things which are of the day, and the things also which are of the night.

Now when the Lord thus appeared unto us, and caused the light of his Son to shine in us, many of us quickly came out of Egypt, turning our backs upon the darkness; and went willingly into the wilderness, to travel along with the Lord, and to be exercised and fitted there for the good land, the land of the redeemed, the land of the living, the land which flows with milk and honey (which is pure heavenly food), whither they that come, find the excellent vine, which bears the heavenly grapes, of which is the wine of the kingdom, and the true olive, which yields sweet oil; and houses which they built not, wherein are many mansions of rest and pure glory; and vineyards which they planted not, wherein the living plants grow, and spring up in the presence of the Lord, who dwells among his, and walks in the gardens and holy plantations.

But there were others, who were loth to come out of Egypt, or to forsake the idols and way of worship in Egypt and Babylon, whom the enemy long held captive in their thoughts and reasonings, and in the disputings of their minds.

Now these suffered much, and felt many of the strokes and dreadful judgments of the Lord, poured out upon that spirit in them, which held them captive, and upon them for their hearkenings and joinings to the subtil twinings, and entangling reasonings and suggestions of that spirit. For the enemy useth all his strength and subtilty to the utmost, to hold his captives in subjection to him, and under his power, as long as ever he can. He keeps every hold, he strengthens every reasoning, and every thought and imagination of the mind against God's call, against the appearances of his Spirit in the heart. *Do not go yet (saith the enemy); thy way is not yet plain before thee, thy light is not yet clear enough; the reason or consideration which is objected, is not yet fully answered. Thou art to try all things; but there is this, or that, or the other consideration, which thou hast not yet tried, or considered of fully, and satisfactorily to thy own heart.*

Thus many pure drawings of the Father (in which there was light sufficient for the soul to follow) have been lost, and the soul thereby hath missed of the hand which was put forth (in the tender love of the Lord) to help and save it.

Quest. But some may say; *What have ye learned of the Lord more than we, or more than ye knew before, when ye walked among us, and practised the ordinances which we practise? Have not we good directions from the scriptures?*

Do

Do not we praise them? And is not the Spirit of God in the scriptures? are they not joined together; and so, having the scriptures, we have the Spirit of God too?

Ans. It is not in my heart to enter into dispute now, though I am sensible of the darkness from whence this objection ariseth: and oh! that it were removed from their hearts in whom it is; for truly, we ourselves were once there; and when we were there, we knew not the scriptures aright, as we ought to know, nor the power of God! But to answer plainly and directly to the thing itself:

There are *three* things I shall mention (besides many others, which might be mentioned) which the Lord hath taught us, since his Spirit and power hath appeared to us, and led us out of the darkness, towards, and into, the land of light; which are these. He hath taught us to believe, he hath taught us to obey, and he hath taught us to pray to him in the name of his Son.

Object. Why; did ye never learn these before?

Ans. No, not so as the Lord hath now taught us. There was indeed some true faith from the true seed in us, and some true obedience, and some pure breathings to the Father, in the days of our former profession; but we knew not the root from whence they came, so as to turn it, and abide in it; and so the holy desires, and true sense in us, were often made a prey of, and we still in want and penury in a strange land, and could not enjoy (possess or retain) what was freely given us of our God and Father in Christ; but still a fleshly wisdom, a fleshly comprehension, a fleshly nature, mind, and knowledge (which in that day went with us for spiritual, as well as it doth so with others now), pecked up over it; and so Hagar was in the house, and would be mistress there, but was not cast out with her seed. Oh! who can read, and truly understand this! But when the Lord turned us to the light of his Spirit, and by the light and power of his Spirit brake the bonds and chains of darkness in us; then we could believe in him who appeared, and (in the strength and virtue received from him) we could obey him, yielding our members instruments of righteousness to do his will; and in the Spirit of the Son (which we then received in the faith, even the heavenly Spirit, the most excellent Spirit) we could pray to the Father; first, sighing and groaning before him, afterwards pouring out our requests and supplications to him, with giving of thanks.

Quest. How did the Lord teach you to believe? Or what did he teach you to believe now, more than before?

Ans. It is written in the prophets, *all thy children shall be taught of the Lord*; and in the new covenant it is promised, *they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.*

Now, as we were brought by the Lord into the light of this covenant, we were taught thus to know him, and to believe in him, and his Son, as thus made known. So that we knew the Father revealing the Son, and the

404 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Son revealing the Father; and our hearts were drawn to believe in both, as they were both revealed in us, and to us, and the revealing was in the Spirit of both, in the light of both, in the life of both, in the power of both; which Spirit, which light, which life, which power is one; so that he that indeed knows the Son, knows the Father also; and he that indeed knows the Father, knows the Son also.

Very deep and weighty was that answer of Christ to Philip, when Philip said; *shew us the Father, and it sufficeth. Hast thou not seen me, Philip? said Christ. How is it that thou sayest, shew us the Father? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also.* Are they not one nature, one wisdom, one power, one pure eternal being? Can the *one* possibly be seen, and not the *other*? Though they may be distinguished in manifestation, in the hearts where they are received; is it possible they should be divided and separated the one from the other?

Those that thus apprehend, plainly manifest, that they never received the true knowledge of the Father and Son; but have only notions and apprehensions of man's wisdom concerning them.

So now to us there is but one God and Father, *Of whom are all things; and we in him*; and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom are all things; and we by him*; and but one Spirit and power of life, which we have received of the Son and Father, through which we believe, and lay hold on the pure eternal power and strength of the Almighty, which redeems and saves the soul; and so believing on him, who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, here we meet with justification, and are at peace with our God, laying hold on his strength, and being held by it.

And so here, in the new covenant, under the teachings of God's Spirit, we witness that scripture fulfilled in our hearts, *Isa. xxvii. 4, 5.*

Quest. How did the Lord teach you to obey? Ye do not obey the ten commandments; ye neither learned, nor teach them: but all that ye obey is all light and spirit within; which may be a spirit of delusion, for aught we know; and we believe it is so, because we do not find it agreeing with the scriptures, nor you in the practice of the ordinances of Christ, according to the scriptures.

Answ. That harsh spirit, which in this manner objecteth, is not very fit nor likely to receive or embrace information, from the meek and tender Spirit of the Lamb; but there are some, who are broken and tendered, and fit to receive impression and information from the Holy Spirit and power of our God; and to them, and for their sakes, are my answers given forth and directed. So, for their sakes, I shall proceed in plainness, and evidence of truth, answering, as the Lord shall open my heart.

Truly, the Lord hath taught us obedience, so as we never learned before; putting his laws into our minds, and writing them in our hearts, and giving us his good Spirit to dwell in us, to quicken and help us to obey and perform his holy laws. And those two commandments (on which the whole law and prophets hang); to wit, *To love God with all our hearts, and*

our neighbours as ourselves, as taught by Moses and Christ; yea, the very substance of the law written in tables of stone, he hath inwardly written in our hearts, and taught us to observe and obey; so that we have no other God but him, who brought us out of spiritual Egypt, by his out-stretched arm and holy power, revealed inwardly for us, as it was outwardly for that people of the Jews, whom God redeemed out of outward Egypt.

Indeed before, other Lords had rule over us, and somewhat still got between us and our God; so that, when we were without the limits of the pure power, we were idolaters in God's sight, though we then knew it not; but now we make mention of the Lord's name only.

So the Lord hath taught us not to make any image, or likeness of his appearance, or of the heavenly things; not to form any thing in our minds from the scriptures; but to wait on God, to know his truths revealed in their own pure nature.

The Lord hath likewise taught us to sanctify his name, which he hath made known to us, and not to take it in vain; but to reverence his holy power and Spirit, in every degree of its appearance; for the name of our God is living, and is only sanctified, and not taken in vain, by those that are living.

Also the Lord hath taught us to observe and keep his holy sabbath, and day of rest (even the day of the gospel-rest, for that is the sabbath now), not doing our own works, or thinking our own thoughts, or kindling a fire of ourselves, on his holy day; but ceasing from our own willing and running, and from all the works of the flesh; and waiting to feel him work in us, both *to will and to do of his good pleasure*; which works in the Spirit (works of faith, of love, of mercy, &c.) break not the gospel-rest or sabbath.

And having thus learned the duties of the first table (the Lord having circumcised our hearts to *love the Lord our God with all our hearts*, and to exalt him, his Spirit, his nature, his will, his name, his day in us), the duties of the second table are easy and natural to us, and we cannot but *do to others as we would be done unto*; and so love and honour all men in the Lord, as the Lord teacheth us from the true and holy balance. Therefore, we cannot *kill*, or *commit adultery*, or *steal*, or *bear false witness*, or *covet any thing that is our neighbour's*.

Then, for the laws and ordinances of the new testament; the ministration of the gospel is a ministration of Spirit and power; even of the light of the everlasting day, which the true ministry was sent to turn mens minds from the darkness to.

And here we see what was taught and required before the apostasy, while the church was in its first glory; and what was permitted and practised by permission; which were such kind of things, as were not of the nature of the kingdom, not of the nature of the light of the gospel-day; but of a lower nature, of an outward nature, of an earthly (elementary) nature, which

406 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

which were to be shaken in due time, that that which could not be shaken (which they signified of, and represented) might remain, and be established in the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem (which is the Jerusalem of the gospel) without any such thing as could be shaken; as is testified, *Heb. xii. 22*, to the end: and we understand also from God's Spirit, and from the scriptures of truth, that all such kind of things were part of, or belonging to, the outward court; which was shaken, and given to the Gentiles, when God's Spirit measured what he would have abide with his true, inward, spiritual Jews; and what he would leave to the professing world; who in mind, nature, and spirit, and in God's account also, are but Gentiles.

Quest. How did God teach you to pray? Surely ye never learned the Lord's prayer; for ye do not practise that among you.

Ans. As God brought us into a sensible condition, so we came to feel our wants, and the need of our souls, inwardly and spiritually.

Now, waiting on the Lord in this sense, when we meet together, and when we are alone also, the Lord breatheth upon us, and kindleth in us fervent desires and longings of soul after that which is pure, and to be delivered from that which is impure; and that we might be ingrafted more and more into Christ; and that judgment and condemnation might pass upon all that is not of God in us, and that our hearts might be so united to the Lord, as that we might fear his name fully. For we feel and observe, that all our life and strength flows from the union of our souls with the Lord; and therefore, above all things, we cry for that, and for separation from that spirit which captivateth into the things of the earth, and in the earthly mind and nature.

So we watch unto prayer, and watch for help from God in our calling upon him; and are deeply sensible that we have need both of watching and praying continually, the enemy is so near, and the soul's snares and dangers so many.

And truly, Christ, our Lord and master, who taught his disciples to pray formerly, hath taught us also to pray that very prayer; though not to say the words outwardly in the will of men, or in our own will; he hath taught our hearts to breathe after the same things, even that the name of our heavenly Father might be hallowed or sanctified more and more, among all that call upon his name in truth, and especially in our own hearts; and that his kingdom might come more and more, that he might reign more in mens spirits, and the kingdom of sin and Satan be thrown down; and that his will might be done, even in our earth, as it is done in heavenly places, where all the hosts of God obey him; and that we might have every day a proportion of the *heavenly bread*, whereby our souls may live to him; and convenient food and provision outward also, according as he seeth good, who careth for us.

Now,

Now, as we are kept in the light, and watch to the light which discovers things, we see what we are kept out of, and what we at any time are entangled in, and so *trespass* against the Lord; and then we are taught to beg pardon, and to wait where pardon is to be received, through our advocate, even as God hath taught us to *forgive*.

Yet this doth not imbolden any of the little ones to sin; but they pray *that they may not be led (or fall) into temptation*; but may witness deliverance from the *evil*, which the enemy watcheth to betray and insnare them with. And these cries are put up to him, who is ready to hear, and who can answer and fulfill the desires of them that love and fear him; and indeed not only so, but they are also put up in faith, that in the way of God the soul shall obtain and receive what it prayeth and waiteth for.

Now we witness this to be *true religion, and undefiled before God*; and we are sensible that the Lord hath taught us this, and is with us in our faith, which he hath given us; in our obedience, in our praying to him in the name of his Son, in our watching, in our waiting, in the silence of our spirits, before his mighty and glorious majesty.

Oh! that ye all knew our God, and his Christ, in the same covenant and power of life, wherein it hath pleased him to make himself manifest to us! Oh! awake! awake! out of your dreams, come out of the night of sin and darkness, into the light of the day!

Be not offended that I call them *dreams of the night*, for they are no better before the light of the day. Oh! be not contented with dreams concerning God; with dreams concerning fellowship with him and the saints in light; with dreams concerning remission, concerning justification, concerning peace, concerning sanctification, concerning the help of God's Spirit in prayer, &c.!

Ah! friends, dear friends (for ye, in whom there are any true breatheings after the Lord, are so to me); oh! let go the dead for the living; away with dead knowledge, dead faith, dead hope, dead prayers, dead understanding of the scriptures, dead strivings after holiness, which ye shall never obtain, but be still bowed down under corruption, when at any time truly sensible, notwithstanding all these (truly groaning and complaining is your best state here, for your peace here is wrong); and come to feel that raised in you, in the true retired waiting upon the Lord, which shall certainly obtain in you, as your minds are united to it, and come into the true sense and subjection under it; and then ye shall obtain in it, and with it, what the hearts of all the upright (whether in captivity, or out of captivity) breathe after!

Oh! therefore, be not any longer prejudiced, by the subtil devices and deceits of the enemy, against that in your hearts which reproves: because of sin; and likewise draws and leads into that which is holy; for it is no less than the pure, heavenly light of God's own Spirit, whatever ye, through

through mistake, misunderstanding, or want of true experience, may judge of it.

XIX.

Concerning the Gospel State.

THE gospel is a ministration of the new covenant, or a spiritual ministration of the substance of all that was shadowed out under the law. There were many things under the law; but in the gospel, God hath gathered all into one; in Christ there is but one seed, one Spirit, one life, one power, which redeems, one circumcision, one baptism, one faith, &c.

The law was given by Moses, and the ministration thereof continued through the prophets, until the seed should come, which was to put an end to the law, and the righteousness thereof (as in the letter) and bring in the righteousness in the spirit, which should last for ever.

The gospel is by Christ, by whom God spake in the last days, who is the beloved Son, the prophet and high-priest of God, who is to be heard for ever; who taught his disciples, while he was with them on earth, in that body of flesh which his Father prepared for him; and afterwards by his Spirit (or holy anointing) whereby he continueth teaching his children, and bringing them up in the virtue, life, and power of the new covenant; giving them a new heart and spirit, and causing the old nature of the earthly Adam to die in them, and pass away from them.

The law was given to the Jew outward, and is against nature in man, which seems forward to obey, but will not.

The law also is given to check that part (or nature in man) which is above the seed, to which were all the shadows and types outward.

But in the gospel, which is the power of God to the redemption of the soul, that part is done away, and the seed raised, and comes to live in the soul, and the soul in the power which quickens it, in and through the seed.

And so, here the life, and virtue, and nature of the seed overshadows all, and changes all in the gospel-ministration; so that here is a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein God reigns, and where righteousness dwells; and the old things, wherein unrighteousness dwelt, and wherein the devil reigned, are done away, and so his kingdom is destroyed, and laid waste in man, and the kingdom of Christ set up, exalted, and established.

Then comes the mountain of the Lord's house to be known on the top, and above all the mountains and hills; and then is the flowing of the enlightened soul thither, to learn of the Lord in his holy sanctuary, that it may know his ways, and walk in his paths. Then is the voice of the true shepherd heard, and the law known (the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) which cometh out of Sion, *and the Word of the Lord* (even the Holy One

One of Israel) *which cometh from Jerusalem.* Then is the day of the Lord known; the mighty, terrible, shaking day of the Lord, which is then upon all flesh, silencing it in the dread and awe of him, who is holy and pure; and the seed is then raised to life, and in life and power, and the Lord alone exalted in that soul. *For the Son exalted the Father only, in the days of his flesh;* and it is so now, where-ever the same seed and power of life is made manifest, and rules.

Then after this shaking, after the work of this terrible day of the Lord in the heart, when God hath purged away the filth and blood of the defiled soul and spirit, by his Spirit of judgment and burning, then that which is left shall be called holy, and dedicated to the Lord, even in every one that is written and reckoned by God among the living in his Jerusalem. And all God's tabernacles and dwelling-places on his holy mountain, and in his holy city, will he cover with the glory of his presence; and all their assemblies (by his cloudy pillar, and by his shining flame) will God be a defence about; before which brightness (and the arising of his life and power in the midst of his people) Satan with his devices and fiery darts shall fall like flashes of lightning, and his storms and winds shall not be able to prevail against the houses or dwelling-places which God builds on this his holy mountain of peace and salvation.

Then the rod of the stem of Jesse is known, and the branch which groweth out of his root, and the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him. *For grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;* and where the grace and truth *which comes by Jesus Christ* is received, and his everlasting covenant entered into, there the same Spirit is poured forth, and rests (even upon all the sons), and true judgment is set up in the heart, and the soul established in the righteousness and peace of his kingdom.

So if any want wisdom, let him ask in faith; it is presently given from the Spirit of wisdom, which is poured out upon the seed; which is a Spirit of understanding and knowledge, and of pure heavenly fear, &c. which maketh quick in understanding the fear of the Lord; which fear (being understood and observed) keepeth the heart clean, teaching it to avoid and keep out of all that defiles; so that here is not so much as a touching the unclean thing by any of the sons and daughters, who are led by God's Spirit, and live and walk in the Spirit; but a following of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus fully and perfectly.

Let sin and imperfection received back to Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon, from whence it came; but let holiness and unstained beauty dwell in Sion; yea, let Urim and Thummim, even God's light and perfection, be with his redeemed people for ever and ever.

Here the wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and the little child leads them. Here the lion devours not, but eats straw like the ox; and the sucking child, and the weaned child, can play in the hole of the asp, and

410 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

put his hand on the cockatrice's den; and they that are in the power can tread upon serpents, and they cannot hurt, wound, poison, or destroy; for there is safety all over God's holy mountain, and the venom or poison of the wicked spirit cannot reach thither, to hurt or poison any there: for God's earth is filled with knowledge, with life, with pure living knowledge, which preserves out of the reach of darkness and death.

Nay, here Ephraim doth not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; for the envying, vexing nature and spirit is taken out of them both. And here is turned to the Lord a people of a pure language, who speak the truth as they feel it, as they receive it from the Lord, in the life of it, in the true sense and understanding of it, and not according to their own apprehendings or imaginings concerning it, which are the various and many languages of Babel. For in the seed, and of the seed, is the pure language; but out from the seed are the many voices and languages (even the confusion of Babel); one speaking as he apprehends, thus; another speaking as he conceives, thus; so plainly manifesting that they are out from the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, whose voice is one, and language one, in all, in the day of the gospel. And he that speaks otherwise than the law and testimony of life speaks in the heart, it is either because he knoweth not, or is not yet gathered into, the morning-light of the everlasting day of the gospel; for there all are to speak, as the oracles of God, the truth as it is in Jesus.

In this day the anger of God is turned away, and condemnation come to an end (for *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*); and the Comforter is come, by whom God comforts the soul; and the soul with joy draweth water out of the wells or springs of the Comforter. Yea, the soul is gathered into the love (or into God, who is love), where the Saviour and salvation is felt, and God found such a present help and strength in time of trouble, that fear is done away, and the Lord trusted and hoped in; yea, and boasted of, in every condition. So that his name is made mention of, and sung of, and exalted over all that can come to oppose or break down the work of his power in the heart; insomuch that the inhabitant of Sion cries out and shouts against the enemy, when he appears, because the Holy One of Israel is so great in the midst of her, who breaks the spear and the bow, the shield and the battle, Selah. See *Isai. xii.*

Yea, in this day the feast of fat things is made on God's holy mountain; of fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined. And in this mountain the veil of the covering (spread over the heart) is done away: for in the seed there is no feigned covering; but an opening of the unveiled eye, to see the unveiled life and power, even the revealed arm of the Redeemer.

Who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? It was said so in the old covenant, in the law dispensation; but it is not said so

so in the new covenant, in the gospel dispensation; for the veil is done away in Christ, and the children there with open face behold (as in a mirror) the glory of the Lord.

And here, where the seed is revealed, and the soul come into the seed, and become one with the seed, that is felt which breaketh the serpent's head; and when his head is broken, death is soon swallowed up in victory, and the tears of sorrow wiped away (so that there is no room for any tears now, but tears of joy, tears of melting love and sweetness, before the Lord), and the rebuke because of uncircumcision taken away. For when God circumciseth the heart, *to love the Lord with all the heart*, then it receiveth life from him, and then the shame and rebuke of the uncircumcised and dead state passeth away.

And then saith the soul, *Lo! this is my God I so much wanted, and so long waited for. Ob! he is come, he is come, to judge my heart in righteousness, and to bring under all that hath kept the seed under in me; and I feel him, my soul's salvation, and my heart is glad in him. And now I know the land of Judah* (for that land outwardly was but a figure of the inward), *and the strong city that is therein* (which the righteous nation that keepeth the truth enters in at the gates of) *where God appointeth salvation for walls and bulwarks.* See *Isai. xxv. and chap. xxvi.*

And in this day, when the seed is raised, when the gospel power reacheth to the seed, and raiseth up the soul with the seed, and punisheth Leviathan, that crooked serpent, and destroyeth the place where the dragons lay, so that as such a place it can be found no more, because the Lord hath made all things new, and laid waste the old, then shall be sung to her that was afflicted a vineyard of red wine, which the Lord will keep and water every moment, lest any hurt it; yea, the Lord (who is the keeper of Israel, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth) will keep it night and day; and though fury be not in the Lord, yet he will go through the briars and thorns which set themselves in battle against him, to hinder the current of his love and blessings upon his heritage.

But as for his people, God will be very gracious to them, answering them in all that they call upon him for, and being with them in the fire, and in the water; so that the waters shall not be able to overwhelm them, nor the flame of the fiercest fire kindle upon them. For the enemies' fire shall not be able to burn up God's heritage, nor their waters to overflow them; but God's fire and waters shall overflow and consume the adversaries, as he pleaseth to let forth his overflowing scourge and fiery indignation upon them.

The gospel is a state of pouring out the Spirit of God upon his seed, and his blessing upon his off-spring; wherein he strengthens that which is weak, and confirms that which is feeble; wherein he comforts worm Jacob, and recompenseth vengeance to that which oppressed him, that which wounded him, that which bowed him down, that which closed his eye,

412 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

stopped his ear, made him dumb and lame, hardened his heart from God's fear, &c. that nature, that wisdom, that spirit, that power, is visited with vengeance. That which emptied him of the good, and made him desolate and solitary, is now smitten, distressed, and made solitary; and the prisoner of hope loosed, and brought out of the pit; and the blind eye opened, and the deaf ear unstopped, and the lame made to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, and the parched ground become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; and that nature wherein dragons dwelt is now changed, and life dwells there; and the holy new earth brings forth her increase of life to the Lord, and the way of holiness is made plain; which rough Esau, or conceited Ishmael, or sacrificing Cain, (who hath not the true brotherly love in him) cannot come into; but holy Abel, blessed Isaac, plain Jacob, walked therein, and inherited the blessing; and the ransomed of the Lord return from all their desolations, captivities, and scatterings in the apostasy, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, where they obtain joy and gladness, and where sorrow and sighing flee away. For when the Comforter is come to the soul, when the Spirit from on high is poured out upon it, then the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for a forest; then judgment dwells in the wilderness, and righteousness remains in the fruitful field; then righteousness is known, and the work thereof; and the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness, and assurance for ever. And the people of God then dwell (even his holy Israel, his spiritual Israel, the redeemed ones by his Spirit and power) in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places, where their God is to them as a munition of rocks, and as broad rivers of love, life, righteousness, peace, joy, and blessedness for ever.

In the gospel state, the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, who is the teacher of his people in the new covenant, who teacheth them to profit therein, and leadeth them in the way that they should go: I say, in the gospel state he is known, and his voice hearkened to. *My sheep* (those whom I gather and redeem) *hear my voice, and follow me*, saith Christ; who feed my flock like a shepherd, guiding them by my Spirit into fresh and green pastures, gathering my lambs with my arm, carrying them in my bosom, and gently leading those that are with young. Yea, I bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and lead them in paths they have not known. I make dark things light before them, and crooked things straight. These things do I do unto them, and will not forsake them. Yea, worm Jacob, which was trampled upon by all, is now made a sharp threshing instrument having teeth, which thresheth the mountains (beating them small) and makes the hills as chaff, which fans them, and the wind carrieth them away, and the whirlwind scattereth them; but Jacob rejoiceth in his God, and glorieth in the Holy One of Israel; who openeth rivers in high-places, and fountains in the midst of vallies; and makes the wilderness a pool

pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. For the Lord hath comforted Sion, and had compassion on her waste place, and on her oppressed seed in Babylon; and hath said to the prisoners, *Go forth; and to them that sat in darkness, shew yourselves abroad in the light*; and he hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; so that joy and gladness is found in her (even the joy of God's Spirit, which is unspeakable, and full of glory), with thanksgiving, and the voice of melody: for the destroyer, and those that made her waste, are gone forth of her, and great is the the Holy One in the midst of her. So that the barren, that did not bear, sings; and she cries aloud, and breaks forth into singing, that did not travail with child; for she travails not now in vain, but also brings forth abundantly: so that more are the children of the desolate than of the formerly married wife. And how can it be otherwise? For the Maker is the husband, who hath made an everlasting covenant of peace with the soul in the Son of his love, and keeps and preserves in that covenant, where the Lord can never be wroth the soul, nor rebuke it: for here all the children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and kept in his holy fear, and in subjection to his Spirit; and great is their peace, and in righteousness are they established, and are far from oppression, the terror whereof cannot come near them.

There are three or four things yet more on my heart to mention concerning the gospel state.

First, In it the gospel fast is known; which is not to afflict the soul, or hang down the head like a bulrush for a day; but to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke, to deal one's bread to the hungry (*to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*, and to keep one's self unspotted from the worldly spirit and nature, which defiles, and so not to touch the unclean thing).

Then the light of the soul breaks forth as the morning, and its health springs forth speedily, and its righteousness goeth before it (for that which judgeth unrighteousness, that is its righteousness; which instead of coming after, to reprove and condemn, now goeth before), and the glory of the Lord is the reward, coming after to preserve and defend all that springs up in the power. Oh! blessed is he that witnesseth this state!

Secondly, In the gospel state the gospel sabbath is kept, and known to be God's holy day, and called a *delight* (the holy of the Lord, honourable), and the Lord is honoured in it by the soul while it walketh not in its own ways, nor findeth its own pleasures, nor speaketh its own words: and then the soul delighteth itself in the Lord, who then (in this state) causeth it to ride on the high-places of the earth, and feedeth it with the heritage of Jacob its father. What is that? What is Jacob's heritage? What is it that Jacob is to be fed with, and inherit? Is it any less than the life and blessedness of the promised land? Is it any less than the hidden manna? Is it
any

414 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

any less than the fruit of the living vine? Is it any other than the sweetness and fatness of the true olive-tree?

Thirdly, In it the garment of salvation is put on, even the Lord Jesus Christ; for here the filthy garments are put off, and the pure garments put on. For here the Lord hath appointed to them that *have mourned in Sion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. So that here the soul can truly say, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness*. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord hath caused righteousness and praise to spring forth before the eyes of all that are truly opened by him; and he will not draw back his arm, or put up the sword which he hath drawn, till he hath destroyed his adversaries, and laid waste the mount of Esau, and made his Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth. *Amen, hallelujah!*

And here is the love which casteth out fear, and removeth care; so that they that dwell here are careful in nothing, but in every thing make their requests known to God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; *and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*, guards the heart and mind, through Christ Jesus. So that here God glorifieth the soul, changing it from glory to glory, in and by his Spirit; and God is praised and glorified in and by the soul, and the heart kept pure and chaste in the eye of the Lord; and the conversation ordered aright by his Spirit and power, in which the soul lives and walks, and his salvation seen and enjoyed daily more and more. So that here is a possession or inheritance of life in the kingdom (in the holy land of the living) of which there is no end. Everlasting endless prayers to the Holy One of Israel (whose tabernacle is with men, and who dwelleth in the midst of his people) for ever and ever.

Now if any one doubt concerning the truth of these things, this word is in my heart to such, *Come, and see*. Oh! come and see the glory of the Lord, and the power of his life, and righteousness of his kingdom, which is now revealed, after the long night of darkness! Oh! blessed, blessed be his name, who hath caused his light to shine, and opened the eye (which was once blind) to see it!

Quest. But how may I come to see the glory of the gospel state?

Ans. Come to the seed, and wait to feel and receive the power which raiseth the seed in the heart, and bringeth the heart, soul, mind, and spirit into union with the seed.

Quest. But how may I come to the seed; and how may I wait aright to feel and receive the power which raiseth it?

Ans. Mind that in thee which searcheth the heart, and what it reacheth to, and quickeneth in thee; what it draweth thee from, what it draweth thee

thee to; how it sheweth thee thine own inability to follow, and how it giveth ability when thou art weary of toiling and labouring of thyself. Oh! this is he whom we have waited for! Thus he appeared to us; thus he taught us to turn in, and to turn from the kingdom of darkness within, towards the kingdom of light, which the good seedsman had sown in us as a grain of mustard-seed; which when we found, we knew it to be the pearl of price, and were made willing to *sell all for it*; and now it is purchased, and also possessed in a good measure; blessed be the name of our merciful God, and tender father, for ever and ever.

O hungering and thirsting soul after life (after truth, after the Lamb's righteousness), do thou also wait to be taught of the Lord (who thus taught us), and then do thou go and do so likewise, and thou wilt never repent of this purchase, or of what thou partest with for it, when once thou comest to enjoy and possess any proportion of it.

The Lord make thee sensible of the visits, drawings, and leadings of his Holy Spirit, and guide thy feet thereby into the way of truth and peace. *Amen.*

XX.

Concerning Baptism.

He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned, MARK xvi. 16.

THIS is a very weighty scripture, and necessary for every Christian rightly to understand, that he may so believe, and be so baptized, as to witness salvation by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what believing is this which is here required as necessary to salvation, and which the promise of salvation is to? Is it any less than a *believing in the Lord Jesus Christ*, from a sense of the power which the Father hath given him to save with? Is it not an inward believing, a believing with the heart? And what baptism or washing is it which saves? Is it not an inward washing, a washing of the soul, a washing of the heart, a washing of the conscience, from dead works, to serve the living God? Doth outward washing save the soul? Inward washing doth; baptizing into the name doth. Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness (the inwardly renewing and washing of the mind) profiteth greatly.

There is one faith, one baptism. Is not the true faith inward and spiritual? Is not the one baptism so also? Sure I am, that he that thus believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, remaineth in the filthy, unwashed state, in which there neither is, nor can be, salvation; but judgment and condemnation, death and destruction, for ever.

The apostle Peter shews, *Pet. iii.* what the baptism is which saveth, even that which is the antitype, or which inwardly or spiritually answers to Noah's ark.

416 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

ark. The Greek word is *Ἀντίτυπον*, which signifieth the *antitype*, or that which answers to the type; the substance, which comes instead of the figure or shadow; and so it is more properly and naturally rendered in the old translation thus: *The baptism that now is, answering that figure, saveth.* For as Noah's ark saved the bodies of those that were in it when God came to judge and destroy the old world; so the inward washing saveth those that are washed thereby from the wrath and destruction which will come upon all that are unwashed.

Now lest any should misunderstand and misapply his words, as if he spake concerning outward baptism, or washing, he explaineth himself in the following words: *Not (saith he) the putting away of the filth of the flesh, not the outward washing of the body, that is not it that saves; but that baptism which causeth the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* For this is the effect of the inward baptism; sin being washed away by the water of life, by the blood of the Lamb, that which is new, that which is renewed, riseth up out of the water which washeth away sin; and then the pure and good conscience answers to God, and the soul knows and partakes of both the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and so being baptized by the one baptism, even the baptism of Christ, into the one body, comes into the state and fellowship of the living. Another apostle also speaketh of the inward washing, even the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; by which, saith he, *God according to his mercy saved us*, Titus iii. 5.

The apostle Paul speaks of a *circumcision made without hands*, and tells wherein it consists; to wit, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh: and sheweth how this is effected; namely, not by Moses's circumcision, but by the circumcision of Christ, Col. ii. 21. And truly they who are thus circumcised are the true circumcision, the spiritual circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh, but rejoice in Christ Jesus, who thus circumciseth them. Now in the next verse he speaketh of baptism, *of being buried with Christ in baptism, and of rising with him in the same, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead.* What is this baptism? Is it inferior to the circumcision before spoken of? Is it not without hands also? What is it that buries into the death of Christ; that raiseth into the life of Christ through the faith of the operation of God? Is not this the one spiritual and heavenly baptism, wherewith the one body is baptized by the one Spirit? What doth outward circumcision avail? Doth it avail any thing? What doth outward washing avail? Doth it avail any more than outward circumcision? But the inward circumcision of the Jew inward, and the inward washing of the soul from sin, doth avail very much.

Now for that place, *Matt. xxviii. 19.* where Christ expressly commandeth baptizing, it is a question very weighty, and worthy duly to be considered, what baptism he there commandeth. For if it be outward baptism, they

they greatly err who apprehend it to be the inward and spiritual baptism; but if it be the inward and spiritual baptism which Christ intended in those words, then they greatly err who apprehend it to be the outward. Now consider the words in the fear and weight of God's Spirit.

It is said, *Go teach, baptizing*; but it is not said, *baptizing with water, but in the name*, or rather (as the Greek is) *into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*.

Now to baptize with water is one thing, and to baptize into the name is another; as they who experience the spiritual baptism know it to be. For the word of faith turns men from Satan to the power of life; and then as they receive the power, and are made partakers of the power, they are baptized into the power and virtue of life; and so they are buried (so far as they come into Christ) by the power of his Spirit, with this heavenly baptism, into death unto sin, and by the same power are made alive unto righteousness; and so the name of the Lord, the name of the Father, Son and Spirit, comes over them, and they rise up in it unto life and righteousness, and so are dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Now any outward circumcising or washing can be but a figure of this; but the inward circumcising and washing is the thing itself. For Christ sent not his able ministers of the New Testament to minister the letter, or to minister the figures of things; but to minister the Spirit, (else how were they able ministers of the Spirit?) to minister the substance; not to minister a circumcision or baptism which might be shaken and pass away, as outward and elementary, but to minister the circumcision and baptism which cannot be shaken; which is the circumcision and baptism of the gospel, the circumcision and baptism of the Spirit, the circumcision and baptism of the kingdom, which is never to be shaken and pass away as elementary, but to stand and abide for ever. Read *Heb. xii. 26, 27, 28.* and consider how all elementary and outward things which could be shaken, were to be shaken and pass away; that those things which were of an higher nature (even of the nature of the kingdom), might remain and be established in their stead.

And indeed as the inward circumcision could not be thoroughly and alone established while the figure thereof remained, the same may be truly said concerning the inward baptism; so that by this it may appear, that the baptism of water cannot be the baptism which Christ intended in this place, because the baptism here spoken of was to continue to the end of the world; but the baptism of water is plainly of such an outward elementary nature, as might be shaken as well as circumcision, and so was to be shaken in due time, that that which could not be shaken might remain. Read also *Rev. xi. 12.* where it is plainly signified, under that phrase of the outward court being left out of God's measure, and given to the Gentiles, that things of such a nature were shaken; and so were those that were not the true and spiritual worshippers in God's sight. For they are Jews under the gospel who are Jews inwardly; and they who are

418 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

not Jews inwardly, are by God's Spirit numbered amongst the Gentiles. And consider how not only the notorious Heathen, but such as had got the *form of godliness, but denied the power thereof*, were rejected, with their outside shadows, as really as outward Jerusalem was rejected to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles.

Object. 1. *But against this it is objected, that the baptism of the Spirit cannot be the baptism spoken of in this place, because the baptism spoken of in this place is commanded; but the baptism of the Spirit was never commanded, nor was it any man's sin not to be so baptized.*

Ans. Surely this is a great mistake. Was the inward washing of the heart never commanded? *Rent your hearts, and not your garments.* What is this but the spiritual baptism? The gospel is a ministration of inward things, and the inward things are strictly commanded there. Can any man be saved without inward baptizing? and is he not commanded to receive inward baptizing? and doth he not sin, if he do not wait to receive it, and give up his heart and soul to be baptized by God's Holy Spirit? If the eye were opened in people to look into the gospel-ministration, and into the inward nature of things, this might easily be demonstrated to the least babe there. For as the gospel was before the law, and could not be disannulled by the law; so this ministration of the Spirit's baptism (for nature and kind) was long before John's baptism, and could not be disannulled by any outward ministration of baptism, but abideth the same for ever; and is to have its place in the gospel-state, where the figures and shadows of things pass away, and that which is true, lasting and substantial, filleth up the room thereof.

Now the baptism of the Spirit, or the spiritual washing and circumcising the heart (which is all one in substance), was called for and required of the Jews under the law; and it was their sin not to answer God's call and requiring therein. Consider these scriptures following, with many more of the like nature; *Break up your fallow-ground, and sow not among thorns*, Jer. iv. 3. Can the fallow-ground be broken up, and the thorns rooted out (else the sowing will be amongst them), without the circumcision or baptism of the Spirit, which is all one in nature and ground? Again: *Circumcise the fore-skin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked*, Deut. x. 16. *Make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel!* Ezek. xviii. 31. (Is not this all one in substance with that scripture, *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved?*) *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved! how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee!* Jer. iv. 14. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse*

refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, Isai. i. 16. to 21.

Is not here the true baptism, and the remission of sins, which ensueth thereupon, with the blessing on the baptized estate, and the curse on the unbaptized, which extendeth both to Jew and Gentile? for with God *there is no respect of persons.*

Oh! that men could read the scriptures of truth, with the true spirit and with the true understanding! For these things which were written to the people of the Jews, were written for our learning; and precious things may be learned from the scriptures, by those whose eyes are opened by the Lord, and who keep close in their reading to that which anointeth and openeth the eye; whereas others cannot but misunderstand and wrest them, to their own great danger at least, if not to the ruin and destruction of their souls.

I shall here mention but one place more, which is that of *Psal. li. 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Can any offer up the sacrifice to God, but he who is inwardly and spiritually washed from that which defileth and hardeneth? And doth not God require this baptism? And what is this but the baptism of the Spirit? who thus washeth the soul with his heavenly water, in the ministration of his word and power, when the virtue and efficacy thereof reacheth to the heart, in and through the faith.

Object. 2. *The baptism of the Spirit cannot be here intended, because this baptism is to be administered by men; but the baptism of the Spirit was never administered by men; Jesus Christ was the alone minister of this baptism.*

Ans. The apostle saith, *that God had made them able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life, 2 Cor. iii. 6.*

Mark; They were made able ministers by God, of that which giveth life: and that they did minister the Spirit by imposition of hands, is manifest, *Acts xix. 6.* and in many other scriptures.

Indeed the apostles were not able of themselves, or by any virtue or strength of their own, to beget men to God, or to baptize men into his name and power; but their sufficiency was of God.

Again, Paul was sent to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, *Acts xxvi. 18.* Now, opening the eyes of the blind is as peculiar to Christ, as baptizing with the Spirit can be.

When Christ gave his apostles commission to teach, baptizing, he told them, *All power in heaven and earth was given him; and bid them not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father: for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence; and that then they should receive power.* What to do? To baptize with water? or to baptize into the name with the same baptism wherewith they themselves were baptized? See *Matt. xxviii.* and *Acts i.*

420 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Now if this commission (here given to the apostles, *Matt. xxviii. 16, &c.*) was to baptize with water, then Paul was inferior to the other apostles: for he, though he had seen the Lord, and was sent from him to open the eyes of the Gentiles; yet he was not sent to baptize with water, as he expressly saith: *he was not sent to baptize* (that is, outwardly with water) *but to preach the gospel*. But if the baptism intended by Christ was inward and spiritual, even into the name, virtue, life, and power of the Spirit, then Paul had the apostolick commission as fully as any of the rest, and the grace and power of God did work as mightily in him to this end as in any of them.

But men are as much mistaken about the teaching required by this commission as about this baptism: for this teaching is not a literal teaching of things, or a discipline into an outward knowledge and way, but a teaching in the Spirit and power; and him whom God enableth so to do, he also enableth to baptize into the same Spirit and power. Yea, indeed, when the life and power ministers (the word spoken being mixed with faith in them that hear), it brings the earthly part under, and brings the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ over the heart and spirit. And this is the true baptism, and the substance of the figure or shadow, which was before the figure either of baptism or circumcision was, and remains when they are gone.

Object. 3. *This baptism in the commission was to all nations; but the baptism of the Spirit fell only on some few at the beginning.*

Answer. The promise of receiving the Spirit is upon believing, and it extendeth to every one that believeth. *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water:* but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, *John vii. 38, 39.*

Answerably Peter said to that great assembly to which he preached, whereof there were added about three thousand souls, *Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, Acts ii. 38, 39.*

Indeed several gifts of the Spirit were given (some to one, some to another, according to the pleasure of the giver), and diversities of manifestations and operations of the same inward life and power: but every one received so much of the Spirit as to make him a son, and to cry *Abba Father*, and to wash him.

And this is the one washing which all the flock are washed with, and so baptized into the one, pure, living body: and this is the substance of the figure, which substance belongs to the gospel-state; though God also saw an use of some figures in that day, and so inclined their hearts then to make use of them, which his gathered sons and daughters (by the gospel-
Spirit

Spirit and power in this day) would make use of also, if the Lord did so require them. For the Lord is our judge, and the Lord is our king, the Lord is our lawgiver; who by his Spirit and power determines in every age what he would have his people do; and who leads into the way of life, truth, and holiness, which always was and is but one and the same for ever.

And what if the Lord, who hath caused his everlasting day to dawn again, and the everlasting gospel to be preached again, will have every shadow and figure to fly away (seeing they are but of one elementary nature and use, and not everlasting and abiding); who may gainsay him herein, and say, that this is not the ministration of the everlasting substance, or the same gospel the apostles preached, because some shadows which they expect, and have a strong belief concerning, are not found therein?

Object. 4. *The baptism in this commission cannot be the baptism of the Spirit, because it is to be administered in the name of the Spirit.*

Ans. The Greek word is not *en*, which signifieth *in*; but *eis*, which signifieth *into*: so that the baptism here commanded is to baptize into the name, into the Father's name, into the Son's name, into the Spirit's name, by turning them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God; and then the power and life of God's Holy Spirit comes over their hearts and minds, and breaketh the power of Satan, and washeth their consciences from that which is dead, and plungeth or dippeth them into that which is living.

Now as God made them able ministers of the New Testament (which is a spiritual ministry, an inward ministry), and gave them the heavenly treasure of life and of his Spirit to minister with; so he required and expected of them the work of the spiritual ministry, which was the spiritual teaching and spiritual baptizing into the inward name.

But that there was also a baptizing with outward water, that I do not deny; and that it was of use, as a type to the weak and ceremonious state the Jews were in (when Christ sent forth his apostles to gather them out of the law-state into the gospel-state) I am also satisfied in: but it hath been since corrupted, and set up above its place by apostates; and every one should consider and wait on the Lord, to know what God requires and will accept of him. For the kingdom of God stands not in meats or drinks, or any outward washings, nor comes in the way of man's observation, but in an heavenly seed, and in the Holy Spirit and power of life; which, happy are they who are made partakers of, baptized with, and led by. God will try every man's religion, work and practices, by the true reed or measuring line: blessed is he whose religion will bear that trial!

It is a great matter to know the gospel-state and ministration, the gospel-Spirit and power, the gospel-church and ordinances, the words of the holy prophets concerning the day of the gospel, the words of Christ concerning
the

422 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

the kingdom and power of God, the words of the apostles concerning the mystery of faith, and the Word which was from the beginning.

These are weighty things, and of great concernment, about which men may easily miss and wrest the scriptures, unless they be enlightened by the Lord in the renewing of their minds, and their eye kept to the holy anointing, that they may not out-run (and so imagine and conceive of themselves according to their own ability of understanding), but know and keep to the gift and inspiration of the Almighty, which giveth true understanding. For as no man knoweth the mind of a man, but man's own spirit within him; so the mind of God (in the words which his Spirit spake), no man knoweth but his Spirit. And there is a key of knowledge to open the words of scripture by, which they cannot be opened without; I mean, such scriptures as relate to the mystery of life and salvation, which was always hid from the wise and prudent in every age.

The pharisees had got a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the law of God, and prophecies of things to come, from the words of Moses and the prophets; but they had not the key of knowledge; and *so they erred, not knowing the scriptures* (notwithstanding all their diligent reading and studying them), nor the power of God.

Every one had need be wary lest he err after the same manner, and so set up his own apprehensions from the scriptures, instead of God's truth and the mind of his Holy Spirit; for then he cannot but also oppose that which is indeed his truth, and truly agreeable to the scriptures, though to man's mis-biassed judgment it may seem different or contrary.

The Lord beget in peoples hearts true desires after himself, and guide them into the way wherein they may obtain all the desires of their souls, which he begets in them; and the Lord preserve all that fear him, from clashing against the present dispensation of his life and power in their day and generation!

The pharisees little thought they would have killed the prophets, had they lived in their days: nay, they greatly condemned their fathers for so doing; and yet they themselves crucified Christ. And many now little think they would have crucified Christ, had they lived in the days of his flesh; and yet they disdain, reproach, and persecute the appearance of the same Spirit, life and power, as it now appeareth in his saints, whom he hath redeemed and dwelleth in, and in whom he manifesteth himself, preacheth and suffereth, whatever men think of them.

Oh! blessed are they that are not offended in Christ, in the present appearance of his life and power! For they are not offended at him who gives life in the Father's name to all that receive him and wait upon him, and worship in the quickenings and virtue of his Spirit.

XXI.

Some Questions answered, concerning the Gentiles doing by Nature the Things contained in the Law; and so shewing the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, Rom. ii. 14, 15.

Quest. 1. **B***Y what nature did the Gentiles the things contained in the law? By the enlightened or unenlightened nature? By nature, as it lieth corrupted in the fall, or by nature in some measure renewed by the light of God's Spirit shining in the heart? And by what covenant was the law written in their hearts? Is not the writing of the law in the heart a promise of the new covenant? And can it be writ in any heart, but by virtue of the new covenant? Is not the least writing of the law in the heart a degree of the promise? For the old covenant contains only the law in the letter; but the new covenant contains the writing of the law in the heart by the Spirit.*

Answer. The apostle had shewed before, that that which might be known of God was manifest in them, for God had shewed it unto them; so that they had a manifestation of the light of God's Spirit in them, whereby they might discern his eternal power and godhead, in or by the things made; for that which is visible shadows out and declares that which is invisible, which the inward eye sees, being opened by the Lord.

Now their hearts being joined to this manifestation of God within, it changeth the heart and nature; and in the changed heart and nature, God writes his law; and the law being writ in any measure in the heart, it hath some power upon man, to cause him to subject to it, and answer what God requires of him thereby; and so his heart and conscience will accuse him, or excuse him, as he is found answering or rebelling against the holy light and law of God's Spirit within, manifesting the will of God unto him. For God, though he peculiarly chose the Jews, and in that sense had cast off the Gentiles, not choosing them so to be his peculiar people, yet he was not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; and had a care of their precious souls, visiting them with that light, and inward manifestation of his Spirit, which was able to save and deliver them from the darkness. And it is testified, they came thus far by this inward manifestation of God in their hearts, and what God had shewed them thereby, that they knew God, *Rom. i. 21.* They had a true knowledge of God from the light within; they had a measure of the pure and heavenly gift: but they were not thankful for so great a gift, in their dark state; and when they came to some true knowledge, did not glorify God, according to what they knew of the Lord, from the light of his Spirit within; but ran out from the measure of the gift into imaginations, into the conceivings of their own wisdom; and this brought darkness upon them, and gave deceit power over their hearts.

Now,

424 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Now, if they had not professed themselves to be wise, but kept low to the manifestation of God's Spirit, and denied their own wisdom, they might have been truly wise; but running out from the measure of the gift, into their own wisdom and thoughts, they became fools as to the true wisdom, and wandered into gross idolatrous conceptions, and brought great judgments from God upon themselves. *And this was their condemnation* (not that the light of God had not shone in their hearts; not that that which might be known of God was not manifest in them; but) *that they loved their own dark wisdom, thoughts, and conceivings, more than the manifestation of the light of God's Spirit within.*

Quest. 2. *But if God was the God of the Gentiles, and thus visited them, were any of them saved thereby? Did not all the Gentiles universally perish, notwithstanding this light, or manifestation of God's Spirit within?*

Ans. God forbid, that the inward manifestation of his light and visitation of his Holy Spirit, should be of no effect to none of the Gentiles; but that they should all perish notwithstanding it! It is testified here, that some of them came so far as to have their nature changed, so that they were a law to themselves, and did by nature the things contained in the law; which it is impossible for corrupt fallen man to do. And these hearkening to that, and following that which led them thus far, could not chuse but like to retain God in their knowledge, which the generality (who followed their own wisdom) did not; whereupon God gave them over to a *reprobate mind*, ver. 28.

But now, those that had the law written in their hearts, and answered it, fearing God, and working righteousness, and liking to retain God in their knowledge, such God did not give up to a reprobate mind, but kept them favoury to himself, and made them more and more partakers of the true and inward circumcision; so that their want of outward circumcision was no hinderance to them as to acceptance with God, but their uncircumcision went with God for circumcision.

And this their state (from the inward life and power) judged the Jew, who boasted so much of his state, because of the letter of the law, and outward circumcision, *Rom. ii. 26, 27.* Yea, this state shall be justified by God, when *God cometh to judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel*, said Paul, *ver. 16.* Jesus Christ is the judge, who will justify whatever his Spirit hath made known of God the Father in the hearts of the Gentiles, and them in their sense thereof, and subjection thereto.

That man who hath bowed to the Spirit, been taught by the Spirit (having had the law of God written in his heart), and learned obedience in the new nature, so as to do the things contained in the law, and hath received the inward circumcision, which cutteth off, teacheth to deny, and keep down that which is corrupt; which will never answer the law, nor suffer the man in whom it rules to answer it; I say, he that cometh into the sense of God's Spirit, and the law thereof, and into the denial of his own spirit,
he

he bears that which in substance is the cross of Christ, which crucifieth the worldly nature and spirit; and as he is truly circumcised, so must he needs also be justified and saved under this yoke. For the Lord God of life, the Father of glory, will condemn none whom he finds in Christ, subjected to Christ, one in nature with the image of his Son; and Christ will condemn none whom he finds in his Spirit, taught by his Spirit, receiving holy laws from his Spirit, and walking in obedience thereto. And indeed I doubt not, but the merciful God hath saved many among the Gentiles, in all ages and generations, by the light of his holy Spirit working their minds into the sense thereof, and into subjection thereto, according to the manifestation thereof within them. For it is not the having much knowledge that saves, but the being subject to the measure of the gift which comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

Quest. 3. But how can those be justified according to Paul's gospel, who never heard Paul's gospel?

Ans. Paul's gospel is the gospel of Christ, the everlasting gospel, the one gospel, which is the power which saves, which is manifested in the new covenant within; which is hid in them that are lost, but revealed, in some measure, in all that are saved. Where-ever the new covenant is, there is the gospel; where-ever the law is in any measure written within, there is somewhat of the gospel.

If a man believe in that which shines within, which manifests the will of God within, he believes in that power which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave; and if he lay hold on it by faith, he lays hold on God's strength, which inwardly visits to save the soul; Yea, and if he obey it, he obeys the gospel, and shall not be condemned for disobedience, when Christ appears in flames of fire, to judge and condemn all the ungodly.

XXII.

Concerning the Rule of the Children of the New Covenant.

WHAT was the rule of the Jew outward, as to their outward state? Was not the law and testimony outward? Did not God make the law in the letter? What is the rule of the Jew inward? Is not the law and testimony inward? Is not the gospel a ministration of Spirit and power? And is it not a more glorious ministration than the law of the letter? Under the law, God spake by Moses and the prophets; but under the gospel he speaketh by his Son; and do not the sheep hear his Son's (the true Shepherd's) voice? We all, like sheep, have gone astray; but (blessed be the Lord) are now returned to the Shepherd and *Bishop of our souls*; and shall we not hear him, and follow him, whithersoever he goes and leads by his holy and good Spirit? *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things*, said Moses. Did Moses say,

426 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

My words shall be your rule; or, the words of the prophets shall be your rule then, in the days of the new covenant? Nay, he did not say so; but, *him shall ye hear in all things*; and he that will not hear him shall be cut off; yea, verily, it is so. He is the minister of life; and he that doth not hear him, and receive life, virtue, and power from him, he builds but from the letter (from what he apprehends from the letter) but is really separated and cut off from the ministry of the life and power. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*; and he that hath an heart, let him consider.

Now, the true Jew, the Jew inward, in whose heart God writes his law by the finger of his Spirit, he is to read and to meditate on the inward law written in his heart, as the outward Jew was to read and meditate on the outward law. And as, in obedience to the outward law, the outward Jew was blessed, and free from the curse, and his outward enemies; so, in obedience to the inward law (the law of the Spirit of life), the inward Jew reaps the spiritual blessings, and becomes inwardly free from his inward and spiritual enemies. *Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*, said Christ to his disciples; and every true disciple in the obedience of the truth witnesseth it.

And here the mystery of all (which was outwardly written and testified of) is known; the mystery of the law, the mystery of the prophecies, the mystery of the gospel, the mystery of the fellowship in and with the saints in light; the mystery of the faith, which is held in a pure conscience; the mystery of the love, which ariseth from the true and inward circumcision; the mystery of the hope, which anchors within the veil, and purifies the heart, *as he is pure*. For the true children, the children of the heavenly wisdom, being children of the hidden life, are begotten in a mystery; for the Spirit of God breatheth upon them no man knoweth how; and thus is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Now as they are begotten in the mystery of life, so the mystery belongs to them, and is revealed and opened in them; inasmuch that they know God not only as outwardly described, but as inwardly revealed and manifested in Christ, his bright and heavenly image.

So here the one truth is known, *even as it is in Jesus*; the one way is known; the one name of the Lord (which is and was the strong tower in all ages and generations, which the righteous did, and do still, fly unto and are safe) is known; here the one baptism is known; here the one supper is known: yea, here the One God is worshipped, as Father and Son, in the One Spirit and truth. So that here is no dreaming in the night, by means comprehendings and conceivings upon the scriptures; but here is seeing with the true eye, in a measure of the light of the everlasting day, which is given to the children of light, who live in the light, and walk in the light, and in the true light (which now shines) see the pure and eternal light daily more and more.

Who

Who would not count all dross and dung (even all the knowledge he can gather and comprehend of himself) for the excellency of this knowledge which God gives to those that are turned to the light and power of his Spirit, from the darkness of their own thoughts, reasonings, and conceivings upon the scriptures, and do wait upon him therein, even in his holy temple, night and day? For all under the gospel are to be priests to God; and all his priests are to wait upon him, and worship him in his holy temple; and to watch diligently that neither the fire go out, nor the lamp go out, nor the salt be wanting to season and keep the heart melted and broken, that it may be a continual acceptable sacrifice to the Lord.

Time was, when we also did believe that the scriptures were the only rule of faith and practice; and so bent ourselves to search out and observe what we found written therein, hoping thereby to have attained to that, which our souls desired after. But we found all the directions thereof weak as to us, through the flesh, and sin had still power over us; and we knew not what it was to be made free by the Son; free by the truth, free indeed from that which stood near to tempt and draw us into sin. But when the light of God's holy Spirit shined upon us, and our minds were by him turned thereto, and his law written on our hearts, in and by the new covenant, which he revealed in us, and made with us, in and through his Son; then we felt the ministration of the power of the endless life, and were experimentally assured, that in the gospel-administration, which is an administration of the Spirit and power, nothing less than Spirit and power can be the rule.

Mark; In the old covenant, letter (or outward directions) was a rule; but the living commandment, or Word in the heart, is the rule in the new covenant; living laws; laws livingly written; laws that give life to them in whom they are written; they are the living, powerful, and effectual rule.

Nor do we undervalue the scriptures, in thus giving honour to Christ and his Spirit; for it is their honour to testify of Christ and of his Spirit, who is the pure, certain, infallible rule of the new life, and who gives to fulfill all the holy directions, which are written in the scriptures, concerning the way of life.

A man, at a distance, may easily speak uncertainly; but let a man be joined to God's Spirit, and feel his holy nature, movings, leadings, and guidings, he cannot but acknowledge them to be his certain and infallible rule; for nothing is more certain than God's Spirit, than the holy anointing, which is truth and no lie, and leads into all truth, and out of every lie and deceit.

XXIII.

Some Queries concerning the Law, or Word; Statutes, Testimonies, Judgments, &c. which David was so delighted in, and prayed so earnestly for.

DAVID said, *Thy Word is a lantern to my feet, and a light to my paths.* He found it *sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb.* He desired to be taught God's statutes, and to learn the way of his precepts, &c. as may be abundantly read, *Psal. xix.* and in other places.

Query 1. What was this Word or Law, which there was such an earnest desire in David after; by observing whereof he became wiser than his Teachers? Was it the law of Moses, the law outward; or was it the Word and Law of life inward?

If it be said, *It was the law of Moses*; then I query in the second place:

Query 2. What rule had David from the law of Moses to say, *That God desired not sacrifice, nor delighted in burnt-offerings*? Did not God desire and require of his people under the law that they should perform these things? And did he not accept of them, and delight in them, when they performed them aright in faith and obedience to him? Was not the Lord pleased with Abel's sacrifice? And did not God smell a sweet savour in Noah's sacrifice? How could David say in truth, and from a true Spirit, *that God did neither desire them, nor delight in them*?

Query 3. Ought not David to try this Spirit, which spake thus in him, whether it was of God or no? Should he receive a testimony from any Spirit so directly contrary in appearance to the foregoing testimonies of God's Spirit in the holy scriptures, without a full and certain evidence and demonstration that it was the Spirit of God?

Query 4. How was David to try, or how might he certainly try this Spirit, whether it was of God or no? Was he to try it thus, whether it spake according to the testimony and law of Moses, according to what Moses had spoken in this matter, which certainly was of God, and was given by God for a law or rule to that people the Jews? If he had tried it thus, would he not have judged it a spirit different from the Spirit of Moses, speaking contrary to the law and testimonies which God gave forth by him? For sacrifice and burnt-offering was strictly required there, and God often testified his acceptance thereof, and delight therein. So that God did accept and did delight therein in one respect, and did not accept nor delight at all in them, in another respect; but his aim was at another thing, and at other sacrifices, which David clearly saw. And so David's eye, mind, heart, and spirit being gathered inward, even thither where God's eye and heart was, he there had a clear sight, and gave a certain sound concerning what was acceptable in the eye of the Lord, and what not; and so saith, *God did not desire*

fire sacrifice, nor delight in burnt-offering, Psal. li. 16. Though the language of the law of Moses speaketh far otherwise, where circumcision, sacrifices, and such outward things are expressed as of great value with the Lord, and as great and high privileges, which were bestowed upon that people in that day.

Query 5. May not the same Spirit, or the children of God in the same Spirit, say to the Lord in this day, concerning things of the same outward nature, *Thou desirest not such outward things, else would we perform them. Thou delightest not in outward shadows of the things of the kingdom. Thou desirest not outward washing the body with water, or eating and drinking of outward bread and wine, which avail no more than circumcision and the passover. If thy delight were, in things of this nature, and thou didst require them of us, how willingly would we be found in the practice of them before thee: But thy delight is in that water which washeth the soul from its filth, and in the souls that are washed therewith. And thou desirest to see thy children feeding on the living bread, the bread which comes down from heaven, and to drink of the wine which refresheth, and maketh glad the heart both of God and man.*

Query 6. If any of the children of the Most High should in this feel the life wherewith God hath quickened them open in their hearts, and such a testimony arising from his Spirit in them, how should they try whether this spirit and voice were of God or no? Should they look into the writings of the evangelists and apostles, to see whether baptism with outward water, and eating of outward bread, and drinking of outward wine, was ever commanded and practised in the apostles days? And if they suppose strongly that it was commanded, or find it was practised, may they thereupon safely conclude that it is a wrong spirit, and wrong voice, that testifieth thus in them, and not the voice and Spirit of the Lord? Had David tried and judged thus, might not he have judged and condemned the Spirit and voice of God in his day? And if we try and judge in this manner, may not we judge and condemn the Spirit and voice of God in our day? David saw clearly that outward sacrifices were not the abiding thing, but significations of that which was abiding; and this sight greatly shook them in his spirit. The Lord hath likewise shewn us clearly that outward water, bread, and wine are not the substantial, the spiritual, the heavenly water, the heavenly bread and wine; but of the nature of such things as were to be shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain in the gospel state and kingdom.

Oh! therefore, let men take heed how they build, or how they judge concerning the appearances of God, by their own apprehensions upon the letter of the scriptures. But let every one be careful to build upon the rock Christ; upon his Spirit, his life, his power inwardly revealed, which the birth which is of him knows; and that birth being kept to, reveals in and to us; but no man, by his own conceivings and apprehensions upon the letter, ever knew, or can know, the Spirit and voice of the Lord.

And

430 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

And thus men may come, waiting here in humility and fear upon the Lord, to judge true and righteous judgment concerning the appearances of God, and the things of his kingdom; which they can never do by their own understanding, and comprehending things from the scriptures, out of the light and quickening life of God's Spirit. For man is dead, dark, and corrupt, but as he is quickened, enlightened, and his heart sanctified by God's Holy Spirit. What can a dead man see? What can a dead man hear? Can he hear the living sound before he is quickened by it? Do not the scriptures relate, and treat of, spiritual things? And can the natural man understand them? Can man's unholy mind understand the words of God's pure Holy Spirit, which were given forth through vessels that were sanctified (some from the womb), and when the Spirit of the Lord was upon them, and they gathered by his Spirit into an holy living sense?

Oh! that men saw their need of the Lord, to open their hearts, and that flesh might be silent in them, that they might come to witness the birth of God's Spirit, and the precious understanding of the heavenly things which is therein given! And then that understanding which is not precious, nor living, nor of God, but of themselves, would not be of so great value with them: for indeed, through this great mistake, many (some whereof are zealous and knowing, according to the esteem of men) reject *that* which is of God, and set up *that* which is of themselves, even of their own apprehending and conceiving; which will be bitterness and sorrow in the latter end, when that eye shall be opened in them, which is at present closed in too too many.

Blessed is he who can truly say, *The Lord hath opened an eye in me, even the true eye, the pure eye, the living eye; and with that eye I now see; but with the eye wherewith I saw before, I now see not: and now I know the difference between seeing the same things with my own eye, and with the eye which God hath given me. So that now my earnest desire and prayer to the Lord is, to keep open in me for ever that eye which he hath opened; and also to keep that eye shut, which he in his tender mercy to me hath been pleased to close up in me.*

And truly this is the ground of the great difference between us and others, about the things of God; for though we own the same things, and speak of the same things, yet we own them not alike, nor speak of them alike. Why so? Because we see them with different eyes, and so have a different sense of them.

Others call things true, and so acknowledge them as they apprehend them from the letter: we call things true, as they are demonstrated to us by God's Spirit, and as we feel the virtue, life, and power of them from God, in our hearts.

Now this we are assured is the true way of knowledge; therefore is it our hearts desire (in true love to all, especially to those in whom there are any tender breathings after God), that people might so wait upon the Lord,

as

as that they might be led by him into it, and quickened daily more and more by him in it.

And indeed those teachings and demonstrations of truth, which are given and received in the pure sense, and in the quickening life, they are the teachings of God's Spirit according to the new covenant; which is a ministration not of the letter (no, not of those shadowy or dead things which are administered therein), but of the power and life. For the law is letter, but the gospel is Spirit and power. The gospel-state is a state of fulfilling those things in the Spirit and power of the endless life, in the new covenant, which were spoken of, promised, and shadowed out under the law in the old covenant.

XXIV.

Some Observations on 2 PET. iii. 14, 15, 16.

Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you: As also in all his epistles; speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction.

Observ. i. **W**HAT Peter, Paul, and the rest of the holy men of God wrote of. They wrote of the *grace of the gospel*: they wrote of the *sufferings of Christ*, and the *glory that should follow*, and the *salvation of the soul*; and true rest, which believers should receive, and enter into in him, 1 Pet. i. 2, &c. and Heb. iv. 39. They wrote concerning the *times of reformation*, wherein those things should be reformed under the second covenant, which had been amiss under the first, Heb. viii. They wrote of the *times of restitution*, and *refreshing from the presence of the Lord*, Acts iii. 19. 21. For in the new covenant, there is a renewing and restoring; and the pure presence of God, which refresheth, is witnessed and enjoyed there. They wrote of the *everlasting kingdom*, the *kingdom which cannot be shaken*, Heb. xii. 28. which stands in that power which shakes all things that may be shaken, but itself is unmoveable. They wrote of the *day of the Lord*, the *day of the gospel*, which brings darkness and confusion upon man's spirit and glory, and desolation upon his buildings, melting and dissolving the old heavens and the old earth, wherein unrighteousness had a place, and bringing forth the *new heavens* and the *new earth*, wherein dwells righteousness, *Isai. li. 16.*

For if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: old things pass away, and all things become new, at Christ's appearing in his glory in the heart;

430 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

And thus men may come, waiting here in humility and fear upon the Lord, to judge true and righteous judgment concerning the appearances of God, and the things of his kingdom; which they can never do by their own understanding, and comprehending things from the scriptures, out of the light and quickening life of God's Spirit. For man is dead, dark, and corrupt, but as he is quickened, enlightened, and his heart sanctified by God's Holy Spirit. What can a dead man see? What can a dead man hear? Can he hear the living sound before he is quickened by it? Do not the scriptures relate, and treat of, spiritual things? And can the natural man understand them? Can man's unholy mind understand the words of God's pure Holy Spirit, which were given forth through vessels that were sanctified (some from the womb), and when the Spirit of the Lord was upon them, and they gathered by his Spirit into an holy living sense?

Oh! that men saw their need of the Lord, to open their hearts, and that flesh might be silent in them, that they might come to witness the birth of God's Spirit, and the precious understanding of the heavenly things which is therein given! And then that understanding which is not precious, nor living, nor of God, but of themselves, would not be of so great value with them: for indeed, through this great mistake, many (some whereof are zealous and knowing, according to the esteem of men) reject *that* which is of God, and set up *that* which is of themselves, even of their own apprehending and conceiving; which will be bitterness and sorrow in the latter end, when that eye shall be opened in them, which is at present closed in too too many.

Blessed is he who can truly say, *The Lord hath opened an eye in me, even the true eye, the pure eye, the living eye; and with that eye I now see; but with the eye wherewith I saw before, I now see not: and now I know the difference between seeing the same things with my own eye, and with the eye which God hath given me. So that now my earnest desire and prayer to the Lord is, to keep open in me for ever that eye which he hath opened; and also to keep that eye shut, which he in his tender mercy to me hath been pleased to close up in me.*

And truly this is the ground of the great difference between us and others, about the things of God; for though we own the same things, and speak of the same things, yet we own them not alike, nor speak of them alike. Why so? Because we see them with different eyes, and so have a different sense of them.

Others call things true, and so acknowledge them as they apprehend them from the letter: we call things true, as they are demonstrated to us by God's Spirit, and as we feel the virtue, life, and power of them from God, in our hearts.

Now this we are assured is the true way of knowledge; therefore is it our hearts desire (in true love to all, especially to those in whom there are any tender breathings after God), that people might so wait upon the Lord,

as that they might be led by him into it, and quickened daily more and more by him in it.

And indeed those teachings and demonstrations of truth, which are given and received in the pure sense, and in the quickening life, they are the teachings of God's Spirit according to the new covenant; which is a ministration not of the letter (no, not of those shadowy or dead things which are administered therein), but of the power and life. For the law is letter, but the gospel is Spirit and power. The gospel-state is a state of fulfilling those things in the Spirit and power of the endless life, in the new covenant, which were spoken of, promised, and shadowed out under the law in the old covenant.

XXIV.

Some Observations on 2 PET. iii. 14, 15, 16.

Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent; that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you: As also in all his epistles; speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction.

Observ. 1. **W**HAT Peter, Paul, and the rest of the holy men of God wrote of. They wrote of the *grace of the gospel*: they wrote of the *sufferings of Christ*, and the *glory that should follow*, and the *salvation of the soul*; and true rest, which believers should receive, and enter into in him, 1 Pet. i. 2, &c. and Heb. iv. 39. They wrote concerning the *times of reformation*, wherein those things should be reformed under the second covenant, which had been amiss under the first, Heb. viii. They wrote of the *times of restitution*, and *refreshing from the presence of the Lord*, Acts iii. 19. 21. For in the new covenant, there is a renewing and restoring; and the pure presence of God, which refresheth, is witnessed and enjoyed there. They wrote of the *everlasting kingdom*, the *kingdom which cannot be shaken*, Heb. xii. 28. which stands in that power which shakes all things that may be shaken, but itself is unmoveable. They wrote of the *day of the Lord*, the *day of the gospel*, which brings darkness and confusion upon man's spirit and glory, and desolation upon his buildings, melting and dissolving the old heavens and the old earth, wherein unrighteousness had a place, and bringing forth the *new heavens* and the *new earth*, wherein dwells righteousness, *Isai. li. 16.*

For if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: old things pass away, and all things become new, at Christ's appearing in his glory in the heart;

432 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

to which they that truly believe in him, cannot but hasten; that the earth, with the works thereof, may be burnt up, and the heavens also; that to the new heavens, and the new earth, may be inwardly witnessed and experienced, and the King of Glory found sitting on his throne, and reigning therein.

Observ. 2. How Peter and Paul, with the rest of the apostles and holy men of God, wrote. They wrote according to the wisdom given unto them. They wrote not in their own wills, or according to their own wisdom; but kept to the gift and light of the Spirit, which they had received from the Lord. They waited to observe the Lord go before, the Spirit of the Lord move, and also give ability from the measure and gift of life, which he had bestowed upon them.

And these are the proper limits of writing and speaking under the ministration of the gospel; which is a ministration of the Spirit and power, and not of the literal knowledge of things, according to man's understanding and comprehension.

Observ. 3. That there are some things in the writings of Paul (and in the other scriptures also), hard to be understood; which every one that hath true life and true sense, does not at first understand, but only such as are grown to a capacity. For the writings of the apostles, and ministrations of the Spirit, are to several states and capacities, and can only be understood according to the growth and capacity of each state; much less can the carnal mind understand or digest that which is high and spiritual.

Observ. 4. That there are some among those whom the Lord visiteth, and reacheth to by his power, who do not attain to the knowledge of the truth, nor come to the establishment therein: some that are always learning, but never come to the true, heavenly, spiritual knowledge of the things of God; some that know Christ only according to the letter, but not according to his Spirit and power. Some there are that learn in such a way, as they can never come truly and thoroughly to understand: for it is God that openeth the heart and ear; it is Christ who hath, and giveth, the key of knowledge; but many learn what they can of the things of God and Christ, without having their hearts and ears opened by the Lord, and without the true key of knowledge; and so those remain unlearned and unstable as to the mystery of godliness, as to the mystery of life and salvation, and as to the nature of the things of God's kingdom.

Observ. 5. That those who are unlearned and unstable in the mystery of truth, are wrestlers of the scripture. They cannot understand things as they are, not having the key; and so they wrest them, and strive to make them speak, as they apprehend and would have them.

And here in this state, in this wisdom, is both adding to, and diminishing from, the holy words of truth: for in many places they add of their own conceivings, and in other places diminish from the drift and intent of God's Spirit.

Observ.

Observ. 6. That wresting the scriptures tends to the destruction of those that do it. God is the Saviour, and the holy words of the Saviour tend to save; but being bent aside by man's nature and spirit, they are not the same they were when they came from God, nor have at all that virtue and nature in them.

And indeed wresting the scriptures is an high, presumptuous, and provoking act, and brings God's displeasure against, and curse upon, the soul.

Now it is impossible for any man not to wrest the scriptures, unless he keep close to God's Spirit to receive from him the understanding of them; *for the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding*, and not another thing. God knoweth what he intendeth, in the words he spake concerning the heavenly things; but man knoweth not, but as his spirit is opened and enlightened by the Lord.

Blessed is he who waiteth upon and watcheth to God's Spirit in reading the Scriptures, not leaning to his own understanding and apprehension of things, but waiting to feel his mind opened and quickened by the Lord, that in the renewings of his mind he may learn of God that which is new and living, which is not comprehended in the letter (or in literal descriptions of things) but in the Spirit and power itself, which is the limits of the new covenant, out of which the children of life are not to depart, but to abide, dwell, and grow up therein.

XXV.

Concerning the gospel ministry, or right way of teaching and learning the mystery of life and salvation.

WHEN Christ came in the *fullness of time*, in that body prepared for him by the Father (he who was filled with the Spirit, and anointed of God to preach the gospel), he preached the kingdom of God, bidding men seek it, directing them where to seek it, and how they might find it; telling them, in several parables, what it was like, and where to look for it, even within their own hearts; and that they might the better discern it, shadowed out the being, nature, and properties of it, in several resemblances. He compared it to a *treasure hid in a field, which the wise merchant selleth all to buy*; to a *pearl hid in the earth*; to a *lost piece of silver, which they that sweep their own houses, and search with the true candle, may find*; to a *talent* (for such is the free-gift of the pure and heavenly life); to *leaven (hidden leaven)*; to a *seed*; to *salt*, &c.

So when Christ sent his apostles after him, in the same Spirit and power wherein he himself came and ministered, he sent them to preach the same thing, giving them this message to declare to men, *that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; and that Christ is the way, the truth and the life; and that the life was manifested*; so that they heard, and saw, and tasted, and

434 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

handled of it; and so were to direct men how to come into fellowship with them in this life, and to walk in the *light, as God is in the light*.

Thus Paul likewise, who was sent after the rest, was sent to *turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*. Acts xxvi. 18.

Now people being turned to the light (where they may receive understanding, and feel virtue, and know the anointing, and hear the voice of the shepherd), those who are over them in the Lord, and are made use of by him as instruments to turn their minds hither, may be sensible of their conditions, and may have a word of direction from God to speak to them. And this teaching is not the teaching of man, but the teaching of the holy anointing; and he that heareth this teaching, heareth Christ; and he that rejecteth this teaching, rejects Christ.

Yet (though the Lord pleaseth thus to minister from the heavenly treasure in some vessels, which he hath prepared for that end) people are not always to be expecting pensions, or portions of food from others without; but to know and to come to the bread and water of life in their own houses, that there they may eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, as all do who have true life in them.

Now to give forth precepts of holiness (as the way in the apostasy hath been) before mens minds are turned to that which enlighteneth, and giveth power to believe and obey; that is not the way of the gospel; but the way of the gospel is to bring to the foundation of light and life in the particular, and so to disettle the spirit from that which is dead, and found it upon that which is living; that a living building of pure life, of living materials, of living stones, may be raised up unto the Lord; in which temple he dwells and appears, exercising his authority and power.

For indeed God dwelleth in the temples of his own building, which are built by and in his Spirit; but in all other temples, which are built out of the Spirit, and only by men (not by God) in a way of imitation from the letter, in which they set up the likenesses of things, and so set themselves to pray and preach, according to their apprehending and forming of things; I say, in these buildings the Holy Spirit of God dwelleth not; but that spirit which hath thus deceived them.

And thus men erring in their hearts concerning the light, concerning the power, concerning the foundation (not knowing how it is indeed laid in Sion) concerning the scriptures of truth (which can only be understood in the light and inspiration of the Almighty, from whence they were given forth) they can never come to know Christ and his Spirit livingly revealed in power in their own hearts, nor the new and living way, and how to walk therein, nor the *truth as it is in Jesus*, according to the ministration of the New Testament (which is not after the letter, but after the Spirit), nor the new covenant, which is made with the soul in Christ, wherein all things are made new, and the old done away; nor the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus written in the heart, which blots out the other law, even the law

law of sin and death, and makes free therefrom; and so they cannot witness what it is to come from under the law, where sin reigns, into and under grace, where life reigns and hath the dominion.

Who knows the truth which makes free? Could men then say, they shall never be made free from the body of sin on this side the grave? *Who hath received grace for grace from Christ Jesus the Lord*, and knows the virtue of it? Could men then testify against it for sin; as if the grace of Christ could never deliver from it, and give dominion over it here in this life? who knows the faith which gives victory, the hope which purifies, the love which unites to God, and constrains unto the obedience of the gospel, and whose strength in the heart is stronger than the strength of death?

Oh! the gospel-religion, the gospel-spirit, the gospel-power, the gospel-love, the gospel-faith, the gospel-obedience, the gospel-knowledge, the gospel-worship, hath been lost for many ages and generations! And now God hath caused it to shine forth and appear again, what a flood of reproaches doth the dragon send forth against it? And how do men strive to uphold their dead knowledge, and their dead buildings, their dead ways, their dead worships, &c. which they think highly of, and magnify; blaspheming that which is living, which came from God, is accompanied with his power, and hath the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit going along with it!

Well, *all flesh is grass, and its beauty shall fade*. Let it paint and make a flourish as long as it can; yet the breath of the Lord hath blown upon it, and it is already withered, and shall wither daily more and more. But the Word of the Lord, which quickeneth and changeth the heart (which his despised servants have been visited with, and have testified, and do testify of) shall abide for ever, when that spirit, wisdom, and religion, which hath opposed, shall vanish like smoke, and sink under eternal condemnation.

XXVI.

A few Words concerning the old and new Covenant; with some Queries thereupon.

THE *old covenant* was that covenant which God made with that people the Jews, when he took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt outward. The *new covenant* is that covenant which God makes with the soul, when he takes it by the hand to lead it out of Egypt inward, which is the land of darkness and pollution.

The *old covenant* was made with the outward people, with the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. The *new covenant* is made with the inward people, with the seed of Abraham according to the spirit; according to the faith, according to the promise: for in this covenant, not they that are the children of the flesh are of Abraham; but the children of the promise are accounted for the seed.

436 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

The *old covenant* was made by Moses, the servant, who was *faithful in all his house as a servant*. The *new covenant* is made by Christ, the Lord and king of his church and people, who is *faithful in quickening them all, reconciling them all, interceding for them all*, according to the tenor and way of this covenant.

The *old covenant* consisted in laws and directions outward, which that nation and people had fully and exactly given them from God, above all nations and people of the earth. The *new covenant* consists in life and Spirit inward, which the holy people, the renewed people, the redeemed people, are visited with, and made partakers of, above all other people.

Under the *old covenant*, though the Lord did great things before the eyes of that people in Egypt, and exercised them with signs, miracles, and trials also in the wilderness; yet the Lord did not give them an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear: unto that day, as mentioned in *Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4.* the veil was over their hearts. But the *other covenant* contains the *giving of a new heart*, the *opening of the blind eye*, the *unstopping of the deaf ear*, the *writing the law in the heart*, the *putting the pure fear in the inward parts*, the *putting God's Spirit within them*, and so causing them to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them. Whereupon these Queries are in my heart:

Query 1. Will not this covenant inwardly reform the heart, soul, mind, and conscience, and amend all in this inward, spiritual, renewed people, which was amiss in that outward, earthly, unrenewed people?

Query 2. Doth not the soul begin to enter into this covenant so soon as ever it answers the Lord in the visits of his love, turning from sin unto him?

Query 3. How precious is that grace of the gospel which brings into this covenant? For the people of the Jews came into the old covenant by the law which was given by Moses; but the children of the new covenant come thereinto by receiving the *grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ*.

Query 4. Can any possibly enter into the covenant without coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving grace from him? Can observing precepts, and directions from scripture, bring into this covenant? Or is it the receiving grace, truth, life in the inward parts, from Christ the Lord, which brings into this covenant? Oh! wait to know the ministration of the gospel, and covenant of life, with the entrance thereinto, O all that truly desire the salvation of your souls!

Query 5. Wherein doth the ministry of this covenant consist; or how is the teaching thereof? Is it by getting a form of knowledge out of the letter, or ministring the letter? Is it not a ministration not of the letter, but of the Spirit? The apostle said so, who knew what it was, and was made an able minister thereof by God, *2 Cor. iii. 6.* Truly none can minister gospelly, none can minister under the new covenant, but those that minister from and in the Spirit.

XXVII.

Queries on Rom. vith, viith, and viiith Chapters.

From CHAP. vi.

Query 1. **W**HAT is it to be baptized into Christ? Is it not to be baptized into his death? Are not they that are truly baptized into Christ buried with him by baptism into death? That *like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in the newness of life.* How can they that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

Query 2. What was the end of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, and sending his Spirit? Was it not to destroy the works of the devil; to crucify the old man, that the *body of sin* might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin?

Query 3. Is he that is crucified with Christ, and dead unto sin, freed from sin? Doth the truth of Christ, the life of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the Power of Christ, make those that receive and obey it free indeed; so that sin cannot have dominion over them, to make them do what they hate, or to hinder them from doing what God requires? Did not Christ himself die to sin once, but now lives to God? And are not believers after this manner to reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord?

Query 4. Have believers received power from Christ (*who had all power in heaven and earth given unto him*) to become sons? Have they received the Spirit of the Father, which hath dominion over sin? Can they stop or hinder the reign of it in their mortal body, and refuse obeying the lusts thereof, and not yield their members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin?

Query 5. Are believers alive from the dead? And can they yield their members servants to righteousness, for God to work in and by them, according to his will and pleasure? Can they ever come to such a state, as to do nothing against the truth, but for the truth? *to do all things through Christ that strengthens them?*

Query 6. Is this true, that to whom people yield themselves servants to obey, his servants they are to whom they obey, whether of *sin unto death*, or of *obedience unto righteousness*?

Query 7. Do men, or is it possible for men, in receiving, joining to, and obeying the truth, to be made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness?

Query 8. Cannot men have their fruit unto holiness, and at the end everlasting life, without being made free from sin, and becoming servants to God? Is the *wages of sin death* after a man hath believed? After a man is turned

438 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

turned from sin to Christ, if he hearken afterwards to Satan and commit sin, doth he reap death thereby? See also *Gal. vi. 7, 8.*

From CHAP. vii.

Query 1. What law is that which hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth; and what life is that in man which the law hath dominion over?

Query 2. How doth a man become dead to the law, that he might be married to another, even to *him who is raised from the dead, that he should bring forth fruit unto God*? Can any be married to the raised living husband, but the quickened, raised and living soul? And can any else bring forth fruit to God?

Query 3. What is the state of being in the flesh, and of knowing the things of God after the flesh? of receiving directions and practising duties in that state? Do not the motions of sin (which all outward laws and directions do but stir up, but cannot overcome) work in the members there, in that state, to bring forth fruit unto death?

Query 4. How comes a man to be delivered from the law? Is it not by the death of that in him which held him captive unto sin? And why doth God quicken with a new life, and kill in the hearts of his that wherein they were held? Is it not that they should serve him in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter? For the letter killeth, and the literal service and worship is dead, and that worship alone is living and gospel-worship, which is in the newness of the Spirit; for such alone the Father seeketh to worship him, and such worship alone he accepteth.

Query 5. Is the law sin because it stirs up sin? Nay; the law itself is not sin, but that which discovers and makes it known: for no man can know sin, but by the law or light which discovers it.

Query 6. How is sin dead without the law? And how doth it take occasion by the commandment to work in the heart all manner of concupiscence?

Query 7. How was Paul alive without the law once? Could he sacrifice, could he read the scriptures, could he be knowing, could he be zealous, could he walk according to the law in the letter blameless in that state? See *Phil. iii. 4, 5, 6.*

Query 8. What commandment was that, upon the coming whereof sin revived, and he died? Was it the law in the letter, or the law in the Spirit? He saith, *the commandment which was to life, he found to be unto death.* What is the commandment which is to life? Is it not the *word nigh in the mouth and heart*? See *Deut. xxxix.*

Query 9. How came sin to take occasion by the commandment (which comes forth holily, and as just and good from God), to deceive and slay him? What was it which it deceived and slew? Was it not that part which thought it could obey and serve God, if his will was made manifest; which now, when the law indeed came, found it could not? Nor can any man obey

obey the holy law of life, till this nature, wisdom and spirit, be in some measure slain in him.

Query 10. Doth then the holy law of God, which God ordains and sends unto life, minister death to the soul? Or doth sin (being provoked and stirred up to put forth its strength to save its life, and retain its dominion in the heart, take occasion by the commandment to work death, and shew the exceeding evil and sinfulness of its nature?

Query 11. Is not the law spiritual? Can sin gain any strength or advantage by that which is spiritual? Surely, nay; but it taketh occasion then to tyrannize over and captivate me (who am carnal and sold under it), till the power of the Lord make a change in my state, working me from under the dominion of it.

Query 12. How is it with the soul in the state of captivity, when sin is revived by the law, the soul dead as to its former life and strength, and not yet come under the dominion and power of grace? Doth it not do what it allows not, and not do the good it would? Yea, doth not the enemy oftentimes even force it to do what it hates, the soul being as yet weak in the faith, whereby alone strength is received to resist him? Is not this state experienced in some measure by every traveller? Doth not every one feel the strength of sin, and his own inability, either to *will or do of himself that which is good*, &c. before he witness help and deliverance from the Lord?

Query 13. Doth God impute to the soul, or to sin, the effect of this captivity, and work of sin and Satan upon the heart, against the bent and earnest desires and endeavours of the soul?

Query 4. When is the soul in this state of trouble and captivity? Is it not after some appearance and operation of God's power in the heart? Is it not after the mind is turned from sin, and desireth to be joined to the holy law of life and obey it? Is it not after God hath wrought the will in the mind to do good; so that the consent is given to the law, and the will is present; but how to perform that which is good it findeth not, because faith is yet so weak, and sin and unbelief so strong in the heart?

Query 15. Is not this the time of bitter warfare, and day of terrible distress in the heart, and of feeling the wickedness of the estate, because of sin; and of crying out, and longing after the salvation and deliverance of the gospel? Oh! *woe is me, who shall deliver me, poor captive*, saith the soul, *in this state!*

Query 16. Is not God very tender to the soul in this state, daily blotting out, and not imputing sin? Oh! if it were not for the exceeding mercy and tender love, and help of the Lord in this state, it were impossible for any ever to come through it! But thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who both upholds in it, and carries through it, so that a change comes to be witnessed, and a better state known by those who consent not

440 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

to sin; but continue in taking part with the good, holy, and spiritual law of life against it.

From CHAP. viii.

Query 1. What is that state wherein there is no condemnation? Is not that the state of the redeemed souls in Christ? Doth not condemnation follow, where there is sin and disobedience? See *Heb. ii. 1, &c.* Doth not God condemn sin, and the soul because of sin, till it be driven from sin by the law unto Christ, and learn of him to walk as he walked, even *not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*? For to the Spirit, to the Seed, to the heavenly man, there is no condemnation; nor to them that walk after the Spirit.

Query 2. How come any to walk after the Spirit? Can any walk after the Spirit, but as they are made free, by the power of Christ revealed in their hearts against the power of Satan, from the law of sin and death? Will not sin and death captivate a man, and entangle him in lusts, evil motions and works, till their strength be broken in him, and his soul delivered and set free therefrom?

Query 3. How doth the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus make free from the law of sin and death? Is it not thus? Did not God condemn sin in Christ's flesh? and doth not the same Spirit and law of life condemn it in ours also, and bring the judgment and justice of the holy law of life over it? And so bringing the soul off from that which is unholy, unto the holy and righteous Spirit and nature of Christ; and bringing it to walk out of the deadness of sin, in the newness of life; it is removed from thence where the condemnation is, thither where the condemnation cannot come: for in Christ, in the new nature, in the heavenly image, in the newness of the Spirit, there never was, nor ever can be, any condemnation.

Query 4. Would God have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in his children? Would he have them walk exactly with him in the new covenant, which both comprehends and exceeds the righteousness of the old covenant? Consider whether Christ fulfilling the old covenant be their righteousness, or his fulfilling the new in them and for them: for he both doth away their unrighteousness, and also brings in the righteousness into them, which is of his own pure, heavenly and everlasting nature. Is not he the image of God? Is not he righteousness? And when he is in them, and they changed into his nature and Spirit, is not he their righteousness? Oh! wait to determine this thing, all that desire to know and partake of the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the true and pure sense of life, and in the evidence and demonstration of God's Holy Spirit.

Query 5. Do not all men act according to the principle, whether of flesh or Spirit, to which their minds are joined? Do not they which are of the flesh mind, savour, approve, desire after, and delight in that which is fleshly? But they that are after the Spirit, do not they mind, savour, desire after, approve,

approve, and delight in the things of the Spirit? Therefore is not this of great concern to all to consider, not so much what their profession and appearance is outwardly, as what their root is inwardly, and what nature, spirit and growth, they and their religion are of?

Query 6. What doth it produce to have the mind exercised by the flesh? Doth it not produce death? Is not the nature, spirit, and wisdom of the flesh separated from God's nature, who is Life? and can it bring forth any thing in the heart but corruption and death? But the minding of the other principle, and being exercised by the other principle, that produceth life and peace; doth it not? Let all that have inwardly experienced these things, assent and testify in spirit before the Lord to his praise.

Query 7. Is not the flesh enmity against God? Can any thing which is enmity against God, who is the quickening life, do any thing but deaden and kill where it finds entrance? Life and peace is witnessed in subjection to God, who gives it to them that obey the law of his Spirit. Is that which is in the enmity, and stands in the enmity, subject (or can it be subject) to the holy law of God? Nay; there must be a new creation felt in the heart, before there can be a subjection to that which is pure and living.

Query 8. Can any men that are in the flesh, that are not truly and inwardly changed by the Spirit and power of the gospel; I say, can they please God in any thing they do? Can they believe, or pray, or read the scriptures, or practise any thing they observe from the scriptures, so as to please God thereby? Nay surely, without changing the principle, without having the heart changed by God's power, there is no right believing, praying, or doing any thing to please God. This makes most men's religion and performances unfavoury, because they know not, nor are turned to, and guided by, that principle and seed of life, which seasons and makes favoury.

Query 9. How may a man know whether he be in the flesh, or in the Spirit? If he be in the Spirit, doth not the Spirit dwell in him? For the Spirit createth anew, and the Spirit dwelleth in that which he new-createth. It is the strong man armed who keeps and dwells in the old house; but the Spirit of Christ keeps and dwells in the new house: and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ (notwithstanding all his religion, knowledge, faith, prayers, &c.) he is none of his.

Query 10. If Christ, the quickening Spirit (the living power) be in a man, doth he not kill sin there? Is not the body dead there because of sin? Can sin live there, where Christ dwells? and is not his Spirit life there, to quicken in and unto righteousness? Yea, is it possible that Christ should dwell in any man's heart by his Spirit, and his Spirit not be quickening the mortal body in which he dwells? Oh! how precious is it to feel the quickening life and power! This is a daily seal of the true religion; and the daily operation of God's Spirit in the hearts of his children, shews who dwells there.

442 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

Query 11. To which are we debtors, who are redeemed to God by his Spirit and power? Are we debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh, which brings into bondage to sin and death? Or are we debtors to that Spirit and power of life, which hath made us alive to God, and preserveth us in life, and quickeneth us unto life, day by day?

Query 12. Is it possible that any one should come to life, but by the mortifying, denying, and destroying of that which nourisheth sin, and leads into death? and what can do that but the power of God's Spirit?

Query 13. Are not all the sons of God led by his Spirit! Oh! how necessary then is it for every man to be sure, both that he hath received God's Spirit, and that he be led by it?

Query 14. What is the spirit of bondage, which begetteth fear when God awakeneth the soul? and what is the Spirit of adoption, whereby the soul can cry *Abba, Father*? Can any cry *Abba, Father*, but those that are begotten of God's Spirit? Many men put up requests, and are able to make long prayers (perhaps such as may be taking to the eye of man's wisdom), and yet know not that Spirit which begetteth life in the heart, and teacheth to cry *Abba, Father*.

Query 15. Is it not a precious thing for people truly to feel the Spirit of God bearing witness, with their spirits, that they are God's children; heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ; and so leading them through the sufferings, that they may come to partake with him of his glory? But do any come to partake of his glory, who do not first come through the sufferings?

XXVIII.

A further Testimony in brief concerning the Work of GOD upon our Hearts, who are called QUAKERS.

IT hath been with us, and so we have felt it from the Lord, just as is expressed, *Tit. ii. 5.* Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

We are a people who have been greatly distressed (many of us) for want of that life and power which was revealed in the apostles days. We are a race of travellers, who have been travelling out of the nature, wisdom, spirit, and course of this world (which is vain and passeth away) towards our resting-place. We have wandered from mountain to hill, from one way of religion to another, seeking after him whom our souls dearly loved. Indeed the watchmen have often laughed at us and mocked us, wishing us to return to them; but that would not still the cry of our souls, which were sick with earnest desire, not after formal ways of religion, but after life and immortality, that it might be again brought to light (as it had been in the apostles days), and our souls made partakers thereof. Now, after
many

many a weary step and deep sickness of heart, when we were come even near to despair of ever finding and enjoying what our souls so sorely longed after, it pleased the Lord at length in his tender mercy to appear among us, and by the directions of his Holy Spirit to turn our minds inwards; shewing us, that *that* which we sought without, was to be found within: telling us, that there was the kingdom, which was not to be found by observations without, but by meeting with, and subjecting to, the light and power of life within. And when we were solicitous how to know it from the darkness and deceit within, this answer was given us from the Lord; its nature will discover itself; it will turn against all darkness and deceit in the heart; it will find out and reprove whatever is reproveable, and furnish the soul with strength against it. Oh! blessed sound from the Lord God of Life, who thus drew our hearts to wait upon him; and shewed us how to wait, and what to wait for, and where we might meet with that which our hearts so exceedingly desired and panted after! And truly as our minds were thus turned inwards, the holy light did shine upon us from the Sun of righteousness, and the pure life and nature from the Son of God did spring up in us; and we felt the power of God revealed in our hearts, and the old image of sin and unrighteousness daily defacing, and our souls creating anew (in Christ Jesus) into the holy and heavenly image. So that here we felt the mercy of God, which saved his people in all ages, reaching to us also; and his Spirit regenerating, renewing, and washing us, with the water and blood which cleanseth: and as we were regenerated and renewed more and more, so we were still washed more and more, and came more into fellowship with Christ in his death; and were also raised up by him more and more into his life, and taught to set our affections more on things above, and less on things below; which are of an ensnaring and entangling nature, in which the minds of the sons of men are held captive, until they meet with that royal, excellent, noble Spirit and power, which breaks the chains and fetters of darkness, and redeems out of them. And now we can testify (in true sense, and in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit) that not by working, willing, or running of ourselves; not by any works of righteousness, which we had done or could do; but by the tender mercy of God visiting, and by the operation of his Holy Spirit upon us (in and through regenerating, renewing, and washing us from that which defiled and stained our souls, and made them guilty in his sight, and liable to his wrath), were we saved from the wrath to come, and from the ways of transgression wherein we walked, before our God thus visited us.

Now it is the sincere desire of our souls, that this tender mercy of God might take effect on others also; and that they might likewise be lighted by him to the place where wisdom teacheth her children, and where the true redemption of the soul is witnessed, and the true knowledge of the Father and of Christ (which is life eternal), given and received; that people might not be hardened to destruction, and deceived of their souls; by a foolish and

444 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

vain religion, wherein is not the substance and kernel (which alone can nourish up to life eternal), but only some shew and appearance thereof, which cannot really satisfy that which is indeed begotten and born of God's Spirit.

XXIX.

A brief Account of the Ground of our Worship, and how it cometh to pass that we cannot conform to the Spirit of this World, or to the Wills of Men therein, but only to the Spirit and Will of our God.

WE fear God, who made heaven and earth, whose power is over all, who hath caused the light of his Holy Spirit to shine in our hearts, thereby teaching us how to worship him acceptably in Spirit and truth; which worship he hath required of us, that we meet together so to do in those assemblies, which he hath gathered by his power, and ordereth by his Spirit, either in silence or sound of words, according to his pleasure.

And God, who hath appointed us thus to worship him, hath power over our bodies and souls, and can destroy and cast both into hell, if we should deny the truth and way of worship which he hath taught us. Yea, if we should deny this way of worship, we should deny Christ, and be denied by him before his Father in heaven. For he himself hath said, that neither at the mountain of Samaria, nor at Jerusalem, should men worship; but they that worship the Father, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth. Now men cannot worship in Spirit and in Truth as they please, or in the ways of their own inventing and setting up; but he that worshippeth in Spirit and Truth must first be made spiritual; and then must wait in silence of the flesh for God's Spirit to quicken him unto spiritual worship. For they that worship otherwise than thus, worship at best but after the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness of the Spirit, which is the only worship God seeketh, and requireth, under the New Testament.

Besides, we have found God's presence with us, and blessing upon us, in this way of worship; and our hearts greatly melted and warmed therein, and power given us over our passions and corruptions inwardly, and to order our lives and conversations holily, righteously, and innocently outwardly: which presence of God, and holy power over sin and vanity, affections and lusts, we would not lose for ten thousand worlds. And what an unjust and unthankful thing were it in us to turn from this way of worship which God hath called us to, where we have met with these things, to that way of worship where we did not meet with these things, and where others do not, nor can, meet with them? For these things are only to be met with in that way of worship which God hath appointed and blessed, and not in that way of worship which man hath invented and set up, which every profane and wicked person can cry up and enjoy his lusts under; but they that are otherwise taught of God can by no means submit to, without grievously sinning against him.

And

Now magistracy was never ordained of God, nor power given to men by him, to force people to sin against him.

And is it not a great sin to worship against one's faith, according to the wills and precepts of men, contrary to the teachings and requirings of his Holy Spirit? Are not they that do thus hypocrites? Was power given unto magistrates to make them hypocrites; or to encourage people unto truth and uprightness both towards God and men? To wait upon God in his fear, to be taught by him the true way of worship, is not this good and right in his sight? And to worship in Spirit and truth as he teacheth, is not this to do well? And was not the magistrate ordained of God to be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well? The magistrate saith we do not obey him; but he should rather enquire whether he doth not require that of us wherein we cannot obey him, without sinning against the Lord, and against the light of his Holy Spirit in our own hearts and consciences, and so bring God's wrath upon us, and provoke him to destroy us both body and soul? But if men will needs be angry with us for serving the Lord, and worshipping him according to his holy law and will, we had better undergo their anger and unjust punishments for obeying our God, than come under his wrath for disobedience. And God is our witness that no stubbornness, wilfulness, or contempt of authority, engageth us in the least to continue through many sufferings in this way of meeting together to worship our God; but only obedience to the gospel and power of Christ, which we have found this visitation and ministration of life from on high to be to us, by its redeeming us out of sin, and from the spirit of this world. And the same that hath redeemed us in some measure, hath required us thus to wait on the Lord to have our redemption perfected; and in thus waiting upon him, it is daily added to, and carried on; blessed be the name of our God. But if we should forbear thus to meet, we should turn from, sin against, and provoke our God (who hath already redeemed us in part, and is still further and further redeeming us), and turn back to Egypt, Sodom, and Babylon, where is the darkness, lust and confusion, and not the holy order of God's Spirit, neither in the conversations nor in the worships of those that dwell and abide there.

XXX.

Some Queries concerning knowing and owning the Lord Jesus Christ truly and aright, who hath been the only Saviour and Redeemer in all Ages and Generations; and there never was, and never shall be, any other.

Query 1. **W**HETHER they know or own the Lord Jesus Christ truly and aright, who only know and own him as outwardly described and related of in the scriptures, but know him not inwardly revealed in their hearts, as the Word and power of eternal life? Or whether they are the true knowers and owners of Christ, who know and own

446 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

own him not only according to a literal description of him in the scriptures, but also as inwardly revealed by the Father, witnessing him formed in them, and their hearts changed into his holy and heavenly image, by virtue of his inward appearance, and operation of his Spirit and power in them?

Query 2. Whether they truly and rightly know the death and resurrection of Christ, who know only the relation of them in the scriptures, but are not made conformable to his death, nor raised by him in the power of his life? Or whether they are the true and right knowers of his death and resurrection, who are buried with him by the holy baptism of his Spirit into death, who through the Spirit have mortified the deeds of the body, and witness the holy seed of life raised and living in them, and themselves raised and made alive to God, in and through the power of the Father revealed in them?

Query 3. Whether they truly and rightly confess Christ to be the Lord and king, priest and prophet of his people, who confess it only from the reading of it to be so in the scriptures? Or whether they are not the true and right confessors of Christ's kingly, priestly, and prophetic offices, who witness him exercising them in them; who witness him overcoming and reigning over sin and death in them; over whom other lords, even the spirits and powers and darkness, have not dominion now, but Christ only; and in whom he ministereth as in his temple, offering spiritual gifts and sacrifices to his Father, and who also prophesieth there, opening and revealing the mysteries of his kingdom to them, as he doth to the least babes that are truly begotten and born of his Spirit?

Query 4. Do they or can they truly know Christ's voice, who never experienced the Word of life speaking in their hearts? Where doth the false prophet speak? Doth he not speak within? And where doth the true Shepherd speak? Doth he not speak within also, even in the heart? And do not the sheep hear, know, and distinguish his voice there?

Query 5. Who knoweth the truth as it is in Jesus? Do any do so but those that have felt the drawings of the Father; come unto the Son in the drawings; and received life from and abide in him? Do any know the truth in Jesus but those that witness virtue, freedom, life, and power, by the truth in some measure? Doth not that saying and promise of Christ (*John viii. 31, 32.*) stand firm in every age? *If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

Query 6. Who are ingrafted into Christ? Can any one be ingrafted into him but as he is inwardly revealed and made known? Yea, is not he in them who are ingrafted into him, and are not they in him? Is not he that is truly regenerated cut off from the old stock within, from the root of bitterness within; and is not he implanted into the new stock within also; inasmuch as he sensibly feeleth the pure holy root of life bear him, and the
sap

ap thereof springing up in him, causing him to bring forth fruit to God in due season?

Query 7. Who prayeth in the name of Christ? Doth he who saith these or such-like words in the best seriousness and sensibleness he can in his own will, "Hear me, O Lord, for Christ's sake: I confess I am unworthy; but "I beg of thee in his name who is worthy, &c." or he who prayeth in the child's nature, on the Father's breathing upon him, in the Spirit of the Father which is given him, and in the time and will of the Father? He that doth but sigh or groan in and from the Spirit, doth not that sigh or groan ascend up to the Father in Christ's name? Alas! how outward is mens religion! But the inward streams and current of the true, pure, and heavenly religion they know not.

Query 8. Who receiveth Christ? Do any but those who receive and bow to the light of his Spirit inwardly revealed? Can any receive him but they that hear his knocks and open to him? Do any know the inward voice of the Shepherd, besides the Sheep? And can any receive his voice, and not receive him? And can any who are ignorant of, and refuse his voice, receive him?

Query 9. Who do truly and rightly believe in Christ? Do any do so, or can any do so, but they who first feel life, from whence the true faith springs? Ah! that all the faith in men were dashed, but what comes from life, unites to life, and abides in life!

Query 10. Whom doth Christ gather from the barren mountains? Are they not his sheep; his poor, distressed, scattered, wounded, fainting, and almost famished sheep? What are the mountains he gathers them from? Are they not the several dead ways, worships, and gatherings without life? And out of whose mouths doth he rescue them? Is it not out of the mouths of the shepherds that made a prey of them; who fed them not with life, with virtue, with pure living knowledge; but with words, with dreams, with apprehensions of their own, concerning the things of God? And whither doth he lead them? Is it not to his own holy mountain (which is exalted by God, and established over and on top of all those other mountains) where the fresh pastures are, and where the streams of life flow, and run plentifully?

Query 11. Who are Christ's kindred according to the Spirit? Who is his mother, sister, brother? Are any so but they that do the will of the Father? And is this obedience a working according to the law, or of the righteousness of the law? Nay; is it not rather of the nature and righteousness of the gospel? Is not that which floweth from him who is righteous, righteous also; even as he is righteous.

Query 12. To whom doth Christ give power to become sons? Is it not to as many as truly and rightly receive him, and believe in his name? *To as many as received him of old, to them he gave power to become the sons of God.*

448 *Life and Immortality brought to Light, &c.*

God. Doth he not do so still? What is it to receive power to become a son? Let the heart that hath received it answer; for the Notionist cannot.

Query 13. What is the reason so many who are high in notion and profession, cannot own this precious appearance of the Spirit, power, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this our day, in the hearts of his children, after the long night of darkness, which hath so long covered the earth? Is not this the very reason, even because they do not truly and rightly know either the Father or the Son? Can any see or know him that begets, and with the same eye not see or know him that is begotten of him? Can any love Christ, and not love his brethren? Is not wisdom, in her appearances, justified of her children in this age, as well as formerly?

Query 14. Are there two Christs, one manifested without, and another revealed within; or is it the same Lord Jesus Christ who in the days of his flesh appeared outwardly, that was afterwards manifested within as the mystery of life, and hope of glory; who also in this our day is revealed and made known within unto his, by the same eternal Spirit?

Query 15. He that truly and rightly knoweth the Spirit of Christ, doth he not know Christ also? Even as he that knoweth Christ must needs know the Father also. Are not the Father and Christ one? Could any one see Christ, even in the days of his flesh, and not see the Father also? (see *John* xiv. 9.) So is not Christ and the Spirit one in like manner? And are not all that are truly of Christ, begotten by, gathered into, and do they not live and walk in, that one Spirit of his? And do they not there know the things of God as they are, and testify of what they have seen and known? Though they that are out of that Spirit and power know neither him, nor the testimony of life that comes by him, no more than the Jews knew his appearance outwardly in their day.

A Query added concerning Imputation.

Query **I**N what state was Abraham when faith was imputed to him for righteousness? Was he in the ungodly state; in the state of unbelief and disobedience to the Spirit and power of the Lord; or was he in the sense of God's power, in the belief of him who could raise up his son from the dead, and in the performance of obedience unto him, giving up his son at the Lord's command?

And in what state must we be, when we witness faith imputed to us also for righteousness? Must we not be in the sense of the same power, and in the belief of it, and in the obedience of faith? Read *Rom. iv.* and consider: for the righteousness of the gospel is not imputed in or by the works of the law, but in the obedience of faith.

It is true, God justifieth the ungodly; through faith he makes them just and godly; but doth he justify or accept them in the ungodly state? Doth he not first make a change in them by his power? Doth he not first in some measure purify their hearts by faith?

The

The CONCLUSION.

THERE are a great many who profess the gospel state, and that they are in Christ, and under grace, and freely justified by grace; so that they look upon their sins as covered by the Lord, and not imputed to them, they believing (as they pretend) in the name of his Son, and obeying his gospel, &c. I say, many profess these things, who do not at all know what they mean truly and rightly, as in God's sight.

For it is a great matter to be in Christ, even to *know him that is true, and to be in him that is true*; to come out of darkness into his light, out of death into his life; out of Satan's kingdom, and out of subjection to sin, into his kingdom, and into subjection to his Spirit. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things become new. Is this true? Doth he that is in Christ witness this? And he that doth not witness this, is he in Christ?

Ah! how many then are deceived about their being in him, and of their hope in him! For how few of those who talk of being in Christ know what the new creation in him means, or what it is to have Christ formed in them! How few know his Spirit by receiving it, by union with it! which yet if a man have not, he is none of his. How few know how to try spirits by the holy anointing, which is only able to try, and discover such false spirits as come in the sheeps cloathing, and as ministers of righteousness, and yet come with the deceivableness of unrighteousness, to draw men from the Spirit and power, or to keep them in a dead form of knowledge and worship, without true life.

So for being under grace, few truly know what it is; for grace is that which hath dominion over sin, and which giveth dominion to those that are under it. *Sin shall not have dominion over you*, said the apostle; *for ye are not under the law, but under grace*. Therefore yield not your members servants or instruments to sin. Ye did so when ye were free from righteousness; but now let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, seeing grace gives you power over it, and makes you free from it unto righteousness.

So justification by grace is only to them who are taught by grace. The grace of God brings salvation, redemption, justification to them, and no others; for their sins only are blotted out, covered, and not imputed, who receive grace, hear the voice of it, and obey it. *Hear, and your souls shall live*. In hearing the grace which teacheth from God, souls come to live in his sight; and the living are justified by him; and in the living way and path of life are the sins blotted out, and the garment given which covers the nakedness; which garment is to be girt about the soul, and kept close on, or the nakedness and shame will appear, and be seen again.

The Conclusion.

So to believe in the name of Christ, and to fly to his name, and trust in his name, and to pray to the Father in his name, and to obey in his name and power; these are great matters, and very few of those that make profession of them truly know them: for his name is living (he was dead, but is alive) and his presence, heavenly virtue, and power is in it. They that know his name, know that which is above every name. They know that which hath an authority from God to bring all things under (both in the heart, and also in the life and conversation) that God alone may be exalted.

The gospel state is a great state, an high state, a state not of shadowy things, but of the everlasting kingdom, where the substance of the things under the law is given to, and possessed by, those that are there, as they grow up in the gospel power and covenant. There the gospel fast is known, the fast which God hath chosen, which is to loose the bands of wickedness (which bind down the good, even that which is of God in the heart) to take off the heavy burdens, under which, and by which, that which is pure is bowed down, and to let the oppressed seed go free. This is the fast which God hath chosen under the gospel; the pure and undefiled fast, even to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world. And to those that observe this fast God maketh a feast of fat things; for their light breaketh forth as the morning, and their health groweth up speedily; and their righteousness goeth before them, and the glory of the Lord gathereth them up, or is their reward; and the Lord is nigh unto them, and is ready to answer them in all that they call upon him for, as was promised, *Isai. lviii. 8, 9.* Now being come to this feast, they are to keep it with unleavened bread, as to the flesh, and as to man's wisdom; but with the bread which is leavened with the Spirit, leavened with life; and with the wine of the kingdom; which Christ eats and drinks with his redeemed-ones, new in the gospel spirit and power, which is his Father's kingdom: for the kingdom of God standeth not in meats or drinks, or any other outward thing, no not in good words concerning the things of the kingdom; but in Spirit, power, and life itself, and in the righteousness, peace, and joy, which is in the Spirit.

The Following appears to have been wrote in answer to the **QUERIES** and **ANIMADVERSIONS** of an Author not named therein. It is supposed, our Friend **ISAAC PENINGTON** might have mentioned him in the Title, or pointed him out by some short introductory Address, which, thro' Accident, was omitted by the Printer.

Concerning the **RULE** of the **NEW COVENANT**, or that which **G O D** hath appointed to be the Rule to the Children of the New Covenant.

THE way, the truth, the life; the everlasting way, the everlasting truth, the everlasting life; that is the rule in the new covenant. God sent Christ his Son, the Word of eternal life, a light into the world; and the message and drift of the gospel, is to turn men from the inward darkness to the inward light; and being turned to it, the manifestation of this light is to be the rule, which manifests the way of light and truth as immediately in the heart, as ever the darkness did the way of deceit and error.

The promise of the new covenant is, *I will put my Spirit within them*; and this Spirit hath an inward law and testimony, which it writeth in the heart; which inward law and testimony is to be the rule of the heart. And as the outward Jews were to have recourse to the outward law and testimony, so the inward Jews are to have recourse to the inward law and testimony; and to witness the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus revealed in them, and their minds and spirits subjected thereto: and this is near, bright, and powerful in those who receive the Spirit, and with him the law and power of the endless life.

The letter killeth: the Jews understood not the way of life by the letter; therefore, the promise was, *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*: and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son; and thou shalt hear a voice behind thee, saying, *This is the way, walk in it*. And this voice is to be hearkened to; this prophet (which God raiseth up to the soul in the

452 *Concerning the Rule of the New Covenant, &c.*

new covenant) is to be heard in all things: and he that hears his voice, and obeys, lives; and he that hears not is in death, even until now, profess what he will.

In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but the new creation; if any man walk according to this rule, peace be upon him, &c. What doth the apostle call the rule here? Oh! wait on the Lord to read in the Spirit, and rightly to understand.

If a man receive the Spirit, and walk in the newness of the light, and quickenings thereof every day, hath he not a rule which is certain and infallible? If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation; and the limits of that new creation (which is the light and power of the endless life, or of God's Holy Spirit dwelling within) are his rule. And within the bounds of that (within the bounds of his light, his life, his motions, his instructions) man never errs; but out of it, deceit, and darkness, and error is always at hand.

Yet (though we do own Christ to be the rule) we do not deny making use of the scriptures to try doctrines and forms of religion by; but know, that what is of God, doth and will agree therewith; and what doth not agree therewith, is not of God; and that our fore-fathers in the faith, were led to batter the superstitions and idolatries of the Papists, by the testimony of the scriptures. And we have also the testimony of the scriptures with us, both to the light and Spirit within, and against forms formerly invented, or now practised, out of the life and power. But we believe the Spirit to be a touch-stone beyond the scriptures, and to be that which giveth ability to try and discern, not only words, but spirits; whereas a man may hold the form of doctrine and godliness, and yet want the power: in which case, nothing can try such a spirit, but the Spirit of God, which is in the spiritual man. And for calling the scriptures the Word of God, we cannot but look upon it as an improper expression, They being Many Words, not the One Word; and Christ is called in the scripture, not only the Word God, but the Word of God. And if, in the fear of the Lord, and true sense, we keep herein to the expressions of scripture, and its form of words, which are found; surely we cannot justly be blamed for so doing.

But whereas ye affirm the scripture to be the rule; consider seriously, and answer me this question. *How is it a rule? Whether it be a rule, as it is literally understood? Or, Whether it must not be interpreted, before it can be understood as a rule? If it must be interpreted, What must be the interpreter; whether must it be the Spirit of God, or a man's wisdom?*

As to that question, *Whether the writings of any now be of equal weight with the scriptures;* I have this to say:

The weight of the words which are from God's Spirit, is according to the strength of life which he pleaseth to cloathe them with. He sent forth Moses, the prophets, the Son in that body of flesh, the apostles, in his name and authority; and the angel that he sends with the everlasting gospel,

pel, after the apostasy, to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, he sends not without his authority; yea, the message that he thus sends in any age, hath a peculiar reference to the state of the world, and the state of the people of God in that age; and none can slight it (whether it be signified by word or writing) without dashing against God's authority, and despising him that speaketh in these latter days. Yea, the immediate word of the Lord, spoken and declared at this day, by any man to whom it pleaseth the Lord to commit the same, is of no less authority, nor more to be slighted now, than it was in his servants in the days past, by whom the scriptures were given forth.

Concerning Christ.

CHRIST is that word of eternal life, which was glorified with the Father before the world was; who in the full appointed time took up the body of flesh, prepared by the Father, to do the will in, and did the will in it, fulfilling all righteousness, to the satisfaction of the very heart of the Father; for whose name's sake the sins of believers are pardoned. And this same word of eternal life, and no other, which took that body of flesh upon him, is also manifested, and dwelleth in the hearts of his saints; who (as they receive him in the faith which is of him) dwells in them richly, manifesting in the vessel the treasures of his divine wisdom and knowledge. Now, this is the precious knowledge of Christ indeed; and this is it every one is to wait for, to find a measure of the same life, the fullness whereof dwells in him bodily, dwelling in our mortal bodies, and making us like unto him, in spirit, nature, and conversation. And he that knoweth not, but opposeth this (in any of its appearances, or operations), either in himself or others, is so far of the dark antichristian spirit.

Concerning the Form of Sound Words.

NOT only the form of sound words, but also the good knowledge of the heavenly things themselves, have been miserably lost, and buried in the ruins of the great apostasy. And though God hath oftentimes touched men's spirits, and given them some sense of the antichristian state of darkness; yet have they not had that regard thereunto, so as to be led thereby out of the state of darkness, but are found in Babylon, by the Spirit of the Lord, at the very time of his coming to destroy her. For though the Spirit of the Lord call out of Babylon; yet there is great danger of not observing and following the call; but of abiding still there, and partaking of her plagues.

Now, though men have had the scriptures, yet wanting the Spirit of God, and not knowing how to turn their minds thereto, and distinguish his voice from the voice of their own spirits and reasonings (yea, of the enemy also,

also, who lieth in wait to steal into mens minds false apprehensions from the scriptures), they have not come into a clear understanding, either of the things or words of scripture; but with that knowledge, and those apprehensions of things, which they have gathered, they have many times been ready to fight rather against Christ than antichrist; and so their confessions of faith, and expositions of scriptures, have been mixed things; rather suiting to their own beliefs and apprehensions, than the true nature of the things themselves: yea, by this gathered knowledge, they have been in great danger of a desperate opposing the pure administration of God's truth, from and in the light and power of his own Spirit. Likewise the churches they have gathered and built up, they have done in a way of imitation of what was done once formerly by the power, and in the authority, of the Spirit; but not in the same power, life, and authority. I might say the same about their ordinances and duties; wherein the Lord (God knoweth) hath manifested to others, and can manifest to them, that they have erred very much.

It is true, ye have rejected some wood, hay, and stubble; and we acknowledge the Lord's goodness to you, in that ye have gone so far. Yea, but there is yet more to be rejected; and all imitations, and knowledges, and interpretations of scripture out of the pure life, are to be laid aside; and the Spirit of the Lord waited upon, in the light which is of him; to which the mind is to be turned from the darkness, and in which it is to abide. Now here ye are very short; not so much as come to the outward owning or understanding of the way; so far are ye from walking therein.

That ye seek to find the power and operation of Truth in your hearts, I do believe it concerning divers of you; and do bless the Lord in reference to any of you that it is so with you; and from my heart desire for you, that your hearts may be answered by the Lord therein, and that ye may feel preservation through that which is of him in you; though distinctly ye know it not, nor how to have your minds turned towards, and to wait upon, the Lord in it.

So to seek to have Christ formed in you, and to know union with him, and a real implanting into him; to know him as a vine, as head, a living stone, a root, as meat indeed, and drink indeed, &c. this is precious indeed to desire, but much more precious to witness: and oh! that ye also knew the way, the living way, wherein God communiceth these things abundantly, to those who once sat in the desolate and barren places, mourning and sorely crying out for the want of them; for then ye would not oppose us for turning people from darkness to light, but be one with us therein!

The integrity which is in any of you, is of God; and though the soul mistake about a duty or ordinance, yet the cry therein after him is not wholly rejected and despised by him. But ye would know much more of him, if ye were acquainted with him in his own way, and worshipped him

in the everlasting ordinance, which is the pure light of his Son; which was before the letter, brings the soul nearer to the Lord than the letter can, and gives a fuller communion with the Lord in Spirit, than can be had or enjoyed through words or conceptions of things. And the end of the letter's testimony is to bring into the Spirit and power, which is the administration of the gospel.

Concerning inward Impressions.

ALL the impressions which are from the holy pure power of the living God, are of the gospel administration, and are of great use and virtue; and he that is gathered out of the dark power, into the pure power of God, who is light, and who gathers into the light, by the message and ministration of the gospel, in that light hath a discerning of the power into which he is gathered, from the power out of which he is gathered. And here he neither can nor dares receive any impression of the dark spirit and power (which is known and experienced to work in great subtilty and deceiveableness) nor refuse any motion or impression which is of the Pure and Holy One. But ye lay the great stress upon owning doctrinals according to your apprehensions of them; whereas ye must come much further out of Babylon, out of man's spirit and wisdom, more into the pure fear and waiting upon God, more into the sense and power of truth, and into the light and knowledge which is thereof, before your doctrinals can be owned and subscribed to, by that which is of God. And this springs in my heart in true love, and tenderness, and melting bowels concerning you: Oh! that ye held the head! I question not, but that ye hold notions about the head, according to your understanding of things; but to hold the head is a far deeper thing than so.

As for that passage about communion with God, apply it; Oh! apply it, or rather wait for the Spirit of the Lord to apply it close to your hearts! For it is possible, by his light and Spirit in his own due season, he may make manifest to you, that much of that which goeth with you for communion with God, is not really so: and, indeed, in the true love and upright tenderness of my heart towards you, I would not have you mistaken about these things. As for raptures, the error is easy; but in that which lies low in the pure fear is the preservation. And, friend; I pray consider this question, which now is in my heart to thee. Thou speakest of departing from the faith: Ah! friend, art thou yet come to the faith? Do not answer it slightly; for I put it not slightly to thee, nor without a cause. For through the faith of the Son of God, an other-guise knowledge and sense of things, in this day of the Lord's power, is received, than thou hast yet attained.

That a man's doctrinals are right according to scripture in all the main substantials, is no infallible rule to try what power it is that works in him,
or.

or what his spirit is; because deceit works in a mystery; and the spirit of error may come in sheep's cloathing, and may get good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple. And there were those that held a form of godliness, and had not the true power, but denied it; and such were to be turned from; because, denying the true power, they denied the Lord that bought them, and so held not the head; and he that doth so, whatsoever he holds of the doctrine of scriptures, hath sufficient cause to question his communion with God, and also the truth of his ravishments and spiritual enjoyments, and all his duties and graces.

Again; a man may apprehend his doctrinals to be right, as to the main substantials, when indeed they are not so. For the doctrines of the gospel are mysteries. Faith is a mystery; the love of and in the Spirit a mystery; obedience to the truth a mystery; the right confession of Christ in and thro' the Spirit a mystery; the worship of God in Spirit a mystery; justification, sanctification, and the peace and joy of the Spirit, mysteries of the kingdom, &c. and it is easy missing and misunderstanding these things, but hard to come to the true knowledge of them; and if any of the true, inward, spiritual knowledge of these things be received at any time, it is hard retaining it, nay impossible rightly so to do, but in that which gave it. And indeed this is the great mystery of religion; to wit, to begin in the Spirit, and so to travel on in the pure light, life, and knowledge thereof, and not to entertain or mix with any thing of the flesh. But now if a man have not the Spirit of Christ, or if he be not able to distinguish the Spirit of Christ, in its voice, motions, and workings, from the other Spirit, and from his own wisdom and understanding; when he reads a scripture, he may easily err and mistake about the doctrines thereof, and let in somewhat of his own, or the other spirit's forming, instead of that which is the pure truth of God. And then this which he hath so let in, will cause him to misjudge concerning the truth, when God manifests and brings it forth purely and unmixedly in others, and make him a great enemy to it.

This was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees and great priests, in the time of Christ; they studied the law, gave interpretations of it, being appointed by God to preserve the people's knowledge; and by their understanding of the law and prophets, Christ could not be the Messiah; for, plainly, that appearance of his disagreed with the law and the prophets, according to their understanding of them. Christ was to abide for ever; but he said, the Son of man must be lifted up. Yea, the very disciples themselves understood not this for a long time: and if the sense of the life and power of the Father in him, had not bowed down their spirits, they also would have reasoned against him in many things. *When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is: but we know this man whence he is.* And when Nichodemus (who was touched with the sense of his power) seemed to favour him; what said they to him? *Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.* And they themselves, in searching, and looking, and try-
ing

ing by the scriptures, found him not agree with Moses, and the law which he had given from God (who they said they knew was of God): but whereas Moses had given a strict command about the sabbath, upon which there was no work to be done, nor burthen borne, &c. he, on the other hand, bids a man *take up his bed and walk on the sabbath day*. How could this be the Messiah, of whom Moses wrote (would they say in their hearts)? Would he teach and practise contrary to Moses? So that there is no certain trying by the scriptures, further than a man is certain that he hath the understanding of those scriptures which he trieth by, from God's Spirit. For was not this plain to them, that no burthen was to be borne on the sabbath? And do they not herein (according to their understandings and knowledge of the scripture) find Christ contrary to Moses and the prophets? What then would follow naturally? A deceiver! a deceiver, would they presently cry. He cannot be of God; let him talk of what power he will, it cannot be God's power: we need a further sign from him, before we can believe him to be the Messiah.

But the way of trying doctrines by the unerring Spirit, and pure light of truth in the heart, is certain and infallible. He who is truth, and no lie, never deceives about truth; yea, the very instinct of his life and nature distinguishes things truly, and never teaches the heart to err, who is acquainted with it, and keepeth to it. And what is the Spirit which is given, and why is he given? Is he not above the letter? And where he is received, is he not to be acknowledged above it? Is not his law of light, written by his finger in the heart, above any literal description or command of it? We must set the Spirit above the scriptures, and the ministration of the Spirit above the ministration of the letter. We cannot be clear before the Lord, in giving way to any professors on the earth herein, but must testify for God against them. Yea, he that hath received the anointing, and knoweth how it teacheth, and how it preserveth from all that seduceth, cannot but give the honour to it, and acknowledge that it is the great ordinance of God in the gospel, even above and beyond the letter. And till he is so known and received, men can never be able to distinguish the truths of God, as held forth by him in the scriptures of truth, from their own conceivings and apprehensions about things, but will be ready to take their own apprehensions and conceivings for truth; and having so done, they cannot but mis-see, mistake, and misjudge about that which is truth indeed. So that the doctrine which they thus set up, is not indeed the doctrine of truth according to the scriptures, but rather that which they conceive and have imagined so to be.

So that, whereas thou sayest, "Your religion consists, first, of right apprehensions, &c." we, on the other hand, cannot but testify, as we have been convinced by the Lord, and felt and understood in him that is true, that a man must first receive the Spirit, before he can have right apprehensions about the mystery of God, Christ, &c. because the Spirit searcheth the

deep things of God; and the things of God knows no man but by the Spirit: therefore, there is a necessity for people first to be turned to the Spirit of God, as being the first step in the way to true saving knowledge.

Concerning the Light.

CHRIST, who had all power given him by the Father, and authority to send forth messengers to preach the gospel of his salvation, he sent forth his apostles and servants to testify and declare of it.

That which they were to preach and testify of, was, *That which was from the beginning; even the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto them.* And this is the message which they heard of him, and were to declare to others, *That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* And this word of faith, this word which was from the beginning, this word which reconciles the soul to God, they were to preach, as near in the heart and in the mouth. And the intent of their preaching and testifying of this, was to turn men to it; from the darkness within to the light within; from the power of Satan within, to the power of God within. Thus was the gospel preached before the apostasy, and thus is it again preached after the apostasy; and this light, this life, this power of the invisible word, is witnessed again to become the salvation, as it was before the apostasy.

Now here, being turned to this, this discovers the darkness, the lost estate, the captivity, the bands, the misery of the soul, and gives to long after the Saviour; and not only so, but it also sheweth the Saviour whom it causeth the soul to long after; and in the waiting upon the Saviour in the light which is of him, giveth to partake of his salvation.

And so here we come to have that work of God renewed in our hearts and spirits, which at any time was formerly wrought; and wrought more clearly and effectually; as it must needs be, as the mind is turned toward and gathered into the pure light, life, and power. And in this we are taught to own Christ, as he appeared in that body of flesh, and what he did in the life and virtue of the Father; yea, the preciousness of that his sacrifice, both in its own nature, and in the eye of the Father; and we bless the Lord for him, and believe in the Father through him. Yea, we bless the Lord for the declarations of the good things in the scriptures, and read them with joy and thankfulness to the Father, and in the watch against that which would imagine about them; for we know any such thing (let in to the mind) darkens. So that we do not fall short in a true owning of Christ, as he appeared in that body; and also we know and own the same word of eternal life appearing in us; so that we can say truly with the apostle, *it hath pleased the Father to reveal the Son in us, and it is the eternal life, it is the Son indeed of the Holy God, and not another.*

Now, for that way of working which thou speakest of, of seeing a man's nakedness, filthiness, wretched, lost, undone condition; of being convinced
of

of his own impotency; that his help is not in himself; that all his righteousness is as filthy rags; of crying out, what shall I do! Woe is me, I am undone! What shall I do to be saved? How shall I appear before the Lord? And so of mourning in secret, and the sore running, &c. and the discovery of Christ, as was in that day, as offered without money, without price, &c. and so the soul's humble and cordial casting itself upon him, &c. and desiring to know him, not only as a Saviour, but as a Lord also, reigning over it, &c. All this we knew, in the true and sensible experience, as it was revealed in that day. But we knew not the word of life within to be the word (though we felt operations from it); and so were not founded upon the rock, upon the word of life, as revealed within; and so when the storms came, they had greater power upon our spirits than we believed they could possibly have. And now in the Lord's fresh visiting of us, we have not lost any thing we had before, nor do deny any thing that God wrought in us then; but have it again with advantage, and precious additions, from the Lord God, in that pure light of life wherewith he hath visited us.

And now God having demonstrated this thing to us, shewing us what it is, and giving us to partake of the precious virtues of it; how can we call it less than a measure of Christ, of his Spirit; than the seed of the kingdom; than the heavenly leaven, &c.? knowing and experiencing it assuredly to be that very thing which Christ so called in his parables; and that in you which is offended at us for it, we know to be not the true birth, but the birth of another wisdom, which is to be cast out with its mother: and it will be a happy day with you, if ever ye come to witness the casting of it out; which ye can never do, till ye come to know, and own, and be subject to, Christ within, to the pure commandment and Word of life in the heart, to the law which cometh out of Sion, and to the testimony and word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And they that come not to know it cast out of them by the power, they thereby will be cast out with it.

But that there are some glimmerings of light remaining in fallen man, directing concerning many things morally good, as to honour parents, to deal justly, to do as we would be done unto, &c. there is, thou sayest, a light discovering these things as duties, and the contrary to be evil, and there is also some answerable strength to come up to such moralities. If thou meanest a light distinct from the Spirit and divine nature of God, I desire thee to manifest it from scripture: for Adam was to die the death that very day that he sinned. And the death and curse came upon his posterity, who are dead in trespasses and sins; but the light that discovers and leads out of evil is from Christ. That which maketh sin manifest, is his light. I read that the grace which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; and that that teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and gives them strength so to do; and that it is the work of the Spirit to convince of sin; and that the Spirit of the Lord strived with the old world to reduce them from their evil ways; and that he gave the Jews his good

Spirit to instruct them, but they rebelled against him: but that there are some glimmerings of light distinct from the Spirit of Christ, teaching fallen man to do this, and some answerable strength in him to walk up thereto, I read not.

It is the promise of the new covenant, that God will write his laws in the heart; and whatever of his law is written in any man's heart, it is by virtue thereof; for man is dead unto God's law naturally, and his eye blinded by the God of the world; but that which opens his eye to see what the law saith, is the light of the Spirit. For that which maketh manifest is light; and that which may be known of God in the Gentiles, is made manifest to them by the light of God in them; which shineth in their darkness, but their darkness cannot comprehend it; but it fathometh and comprehendeth the darkness, and is able to gather the mind out of it, being subjected to it, in the will which it creates and begets, through the eternal power which visits by it, and is present with it, to work the mind out of, and deliver it from, the darkness. And as this light comes from Christ (*for he is the true light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world*) so it discovers and maketh manifest Christ, in his nature and Spirit, and leadeth and guideth towards him; and he that is led to him in Spirit, and born of him in Spirit, cannot miss of the benefit and virtue of what he did in that body of flesh; being gathered into, and found in, that which is of him, to which all belongs. And in and by this is received that nature wherein the law is answered; and the work of answering the law, is through the renewing of the mind, and an evidence of somewhat of a new nature; every degree of which nature is begotten and maintained by Christ, the power of God; who is over the fall, and the whole corruption thereof. But by the old corrupt nature or mind, can no man do the things contained in the law; for it is enmity against God, and is not subject to his holy law; neither indeed can be. But the law is spiritual, holy, just, and good, converting the soul, and making wise the simple; which work it effecteth, where-ever it is written in the heart, by the finger of God's Spirit.

Then again, as touching God's imputing Christ's active and passive obedience, &c. we do not lay the stress of justification in believing a notion, concerning Christ's active and passive obedience; but this we know, that Christ did obey and suffer, and that it was for our sakes; and that, for his sake, there is a gift given us from the Father, to draw us to Christ; and that he that is overcome to God, by the gift of his light, is thereby drawn out of the darkness; and that that gift brings every man (that hears the heavenly voice thereof, and follows it) into the Son's light, into the Son's nature, into the Son's life, into the Son's Spirit; in which, the Gentiles might partake of remission of sins for his sake, being gathered thereby out of the darkness, into his light and power. For though they had never heard the outward sound or name Christ; yet feeling the thing, and being gathered to God by the thing, the value and virtue of it could not but redound

dound to them: for it is not the outward name, but the inward life and power, which is the Saviour.

And whereas the voice of the Spirit saith, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*; what are the waters to which the thirsty are invited to come? Did we not believe in Christ, and cast ourselves on Christ in that day, according as thou apprehendest? And yet the thirst and cry of our souls was not satisfied. But the living waters satisfy the thirst. Nor is it a believing a relation concerning the thing; but a receiving of the thing, of the milk, of the wine, of the living water, which answers the desire of the thirsty soul. And by coming to the living waters, and hearing the living voice, and eating and drinking the living food, the soul lives, and the everlasting covenant is made with it, even the sure mercies of David, which are sure in the covenant of life for ever. And those that are living, in and by the true life, cannot desire to reap or enjoy any thing out of the new covenant of life, but only in it.

This is in my heart concerning you: Ye lay the stress upon a notion, and upon an act of the creature from and upon a notion; which they that are out of the life may perform; and who (that hath any sense of a man in him) would not perform, to avoid perishing? That is, who would not thus cast himself upon Christ, if believing after such a manner would save him? And yet there is also a difference, a very great difference, between doing of it now, when Christ is generally owned as the Saviour, and doing it then, when he was generally disowned. In them who thus believed, it argued the teachings of the life and power so to do; but now the form of owning Christ is far more common than any form or way of disowning him. So that now, not the word, nor the form, nor the outward owning, or the casting of the soul upon Christ, is so much to be considered or valued; but rather the power, the light, the life, the gift, wherein and whereby this is alone rightly and truly done. And he that owneth Christ aright, will own that which is of Christ, the manifestation and gift of his Spirit, the shining of his pure light, first in the darkness, and then out of the darkness, to that mind which it hath gathered and preserveth out of the darkness.

And then for being compleat in Christ in a relative way, while the heart is unmortified, and unsubdued to God; it is a dangerous mistaking about these things. I do confess that sins are pardoned upon a true belief, and the soul enters into the covenant of life, and is accepted with the Lord, as it finds entrance thereinto, and walks therein. And there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. But if there be an hearkening to the flesh, and walking after the lusts and desires thereof, is there no condemnation then? Is not the justification in the covenant, and according to the laws of the covenant? Alas! alas! how do men imagine concerning things! and so in their imaginations justify themselves wherein the Lord condemns them; and know not the way of the covenant, and of the justification thereof. For there is a new covenant,

as well as as an old (and the new is not like the old); and a walking with God in the new covenant; and every step in it his life justifies, and every step out of it his life condemns; and the Mediator of the new covenant justifies it according to the new covenant, and never otherwise. For the way of God is perfect (the way of life, the way of reconciliation, the way of redemption), and the soul is only accepted and justified of the Lord therein. Yea, justification is a mystery to man's wisdom and understanding, with all his knowledge he can gather from scripture: and he only knows it who feels it, and hath the experience of it, in that which is true, and which cannot deceive.

Concerning Justification.

THE apostle James saith expressly, That by works a man is justified, and not by faith only; and his words were from God's Spirit, and are true, and the Lord saw an use and service of them. There are works which are excluded the covenant of life, and there are works which are not excluded, no not to justification. There are works required by the covenant; works wrought in the faith and by the power of God; and when they are brought to the light, it is made manifest that they were wrought in God; even works that are of his Son, wrought in the life and by the Spirit of his Son, and these the Father always justifieth. Yet we do not say this is a man's justification for his sins past, but they are forgiven for his name's sake: nor do they expiate sins afterward committed, &c. but the advocate intercedes, and his blood washes them away. But this we say, that alone in the faith, in the obedience of the new covenant, the justification of the new covenant is witnessed: and the new covenant justifieth no sin, nor the soul in sin; but purgeth away the sin, and justifieth from it, washing off the venom and defilement of the wicked spirit from the conscience, which the Lord purgeth by the faith, and by the virtue of the water and blood which the faith brings in.

Now having been led by God into the pure covenant of life, and having there had the true sense, knowledge, and experience of things, even of the truth as it is in Jesus, we cannot but speak and testify of it as we have felt and received it; and here we know and find certainly and infallibly, that it is not the law of works which justifieth the believer, nor the obedience or righteousness thereof; but there is a righteousness revealed, of an higher nature and kind than the righteousness of that law, which is made the soul's in and by the faith. And this is Christ's righteousness, the righteousness of his life, the righteousness of his nature, the righteousness of his Spirit, which is revealed in the soul, and which, in the union with Christ, becomes the soul's, and Christ thereby is made of God unto us righteousness. And the works which are wrought in man by this righteous Spirit and holy power, are of far more value in themselves, and of more acceptance with God, than man's obedience to the law could be, could he obey
ever

ever so exactly; for these are from an higher principle, and of a far more excellent nature, spirit and kind, than man's nature and spirit is; and yet the acceptance is not for the works' sake, but for the sake of the worker of these works.

Concerning God's Love to Mankind

GREAT is the love of God to mankind, who desireth not their destruction, but their redemption and salvation from that which destroyeth. Now from and according to this love, he sent Christ as a ransom, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world: and not only so, but he hath given him as a light to enlighten all the dark parts of the earth, that every soul might believe in his light, and by its guidance and power come out of the darkness: and the free gift is as large and as powerful to save, as the offence or offences are to destroy. So that God hath not only said it, but he hath manifested that he desireth not the death of a sinner; but would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of his truth, and gift of his grace, that they might be saved thereby. And this is the gospel, even the grace which bringeth salvation, and the power of eternal life, to all mens doors; by and in which the Spirit of the Lord God (who is able to save) strives with them and in them (according to his pleasure) against the enemy.

Now for men to interpret a scripture so as to overturn this, contrary to the very drift of the gospel, and contrary to the very nature and heart of God, they do not well, nor by the guidance of his Spirit in so doing. And now in love to thee, though I have not much freedom to open these things, knowing that they are above the state of most people to understand, and that it is rather proper for them to wait in what is clear and manifest, than to meddle with things hard to be understood; and deeply mysterious, before the Spirit of the Lord opens them to them: yet I say, in love I find freedom in the Lord to say a little to thee. Mind the words of the apostle, in fear and reverence towards the Lord. *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of his wrath fitted to destruction?*

Now consider, how is God willing to shew his wrath, and to make the power of his destroying a vessel known? Is it a thing natural to him? Is it not contrary to his nature to destroy? Any who can testify any thing of the life of God in their hearts, do they find any thing of a destroying nature in it? Christ, who was the express image of God, did not he come to save? Did he come to destroy any? And when any resisted the counsel of God against themselves, was it not grievous to him? *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thee!* Here the heart of God towards the sons of men may be read, as in a true glass. And before the Lord gives them up to destruction, doth he not endure them with much long-suffering? And is it

not

not the proper intent of the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God to lead men to repentance? *Rom. ii. 4.* And they that are led by the long-suffering to repent, do they not witness it salvation? *2 Pet. iii. 15.* Ah! wait on God, that thou mayest understand these things from him as they are; and not according to the imaginations and reasonings of thine own wisdom and understanding. It hath been a long night of darkness, wherein many misapprehensions and false conceivings upon scriptures have been swallowed down, which the Lord pitied us under, and bare with us in them; but now it is high time to bow down to and receive that light which purgeth the vessel from all such misapprehensions and misconceivings, which are as really hay and stubble in the sight of God, as the grossest darkness of popery is.

Concerning Baptism.

WE own the one baptism; and, blessed be the Lord, are baptized therewith into one body. That of water was but the forerunner's, but the shadow of Christ's baptism, which is with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when Christ sent his apostles to preach and baptize, did he send them to baptize with the forerunner's baptism, or with his own baptism, when he said, *Go teach all nations, baptizing them into the name, &c.*? Paul professeth openly he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Was he not an apostle? Had he not seen the Lord? Had he not his commission from him? Did not the apostolick commission contain baptism as fully as preaching? Is it not said, *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved*? Yes, without doubt, it did contain Christ's baptism (without which there is no salvation) as well as preaching; but the baptism of water, which was a figure of the thing (which Paul did find freedom to do to some) Paul said he was not sent to do. He did it not by commandment, but he might do it by permission, as well as circumcise; which was another figure of the same thing.

Concerning Perfection.

CHRIST is a perfect physician, and is able to work a perfect cure on the heart that believeth in him, and waiteth upon him: yea, he came to destroy the works of the devil, to cleanse man's mind of the darkness and power of Satan, and to fill it with the life and power of truth; and he sent forth a ministry not only for the beginning, but for the perfecting of the work: yea, his Word in the mouth and heart is powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, and he can cast out the strong man, and cut down all that is corrupt and contrary to himself, and break down every strong-hold in the mind, and spoil all the goods of the enemy. Christ likewise bids his disciples *be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect*; and the apostle bids men

men perfect holiness in the fear of God, that they might be fully separated from, and not so much as touch, the unclean thing; but enjoy the promises of God's dwelling in them, and walking in them, whose temple under the gospel is to be pure. And if a man wait upon God in the work of purifying, and witness the power and virtue of the new covenant, even the fear put into the heart, which keepeth the heart clean, and will not suffer it to depart from the Lord, and witness the powerful law of the endless life giving him dominion over the law of sin and death in the members, and the Spirit of the Lord put within him, causing him to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and do them; surely this man cometh near to perfection. Did Christ cure perfectly outwardly in the days of his flesh; and shall he not cure perfectly inwardly, in the day of his Spirit? Yes, certainly; the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, the lepers, waiting upon him in the way of his covenant, shall be cured by him as perfectly inwardly, as ever the others were outwardly. And then is the day of joy, and of reaping the good things which the promises contain, feeding on the feast of fat things on God's holy mountain, in peace of spirit, in security from the soul's enemies, none of them being able to come near to hurt or destroy; nay, not so much as to make afraid on the mountain of God's holiness: and then the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb is sung, and walking in the way of holiness witnessed; which no unclean thing can pass over to, but only the ransomed and redeemed of the Lord.

Now if any man come in truth to witness this from the Lord, and hath found by his consuming fire the dross burnt up in him, and his soul cleansed from what is corrupt and unrighteous; doth he deceive himself, or is he a liar, if he say the Lord hath cleansed me from all my unrighteousness? And did John speak there of his own state, or of the state of the other apostles and believers, who were grown up in the life and power of truth, and had overcome the wicked-one, by the strength of Christ in them? Or did he speak condescendingly (as the apostles often did with the weak: becoming as weak, when they were exalted by God to an higher state than that condition signified)? Had he not fellowship with the Father and the Son? And was not his joy full? And is the joy of any full, while sin, while corruption, is near and hath power; while Satan, while the powers of darkness, are not trodden under foot? There is a state of righteousness without Christ, wherein if a man say he hath no sin (and so thinks he hath no need of Christ) he deceives himself. But there is a power in Christ to perfect the work of redemption in the heart; to sanctify the creature wholly, in body, soul, and spirit; yea, his leaven received will work, and works daily, till it hath wrought all out, and the whole be leavened; and he that truly feeleth it so, and can say in God's presence, and in the true fear and humility of heart, The old leaven is wholly wrought out, and the new hath wholly leavened me; this is not the voice of deceit, but of truth, in him.

As for that question, Whether Christ hath not reigned in his Spirit all along in the souls of his true people?

Answ. There hath been little of Christ's reign in Spirit witnessed all along the apostasy. It is a great matter to come to witness Christ's reign in the heart: yea, there are many who never yet came through the suffering which goes before the reign: but the cross, the power of the cross, and the thorough death thereby of all that stands in the way of Christ's pure reigning, is yet to be taken up, and many journeys to be gone, before men come to witness Christ's kingdom, and the reign of his Spirit therein?

There are some other passages which I find in my heart to say somewhat to. One is this: "That ye know through mercy when ye are well; that ye are satisfied, &c."

There hath been a cloudy and a dark day; which, for its thickness, may well be called night; wherein the people of the Lord have been scattered from mountain to hill, seeking their resting-place.

Now it hath pleased the Lord, after this thick night of darkness to gather the scattered sheep, and to become the physician (in the ministration of his Spirit, life, and power) to heal them, and bind them up.

And those that have been sick and distressed, and brought into the true sense, they feel the need of the physician, and bless his name for the healing which he bringeth with him under his wings.

But there are some that are fat and strong, and whole and compleat by an imputed righteousness, according to their own apprehending; and these are well; these are satisfied; they have no need of this visitation of God, nor of this dispensation of life and power from on high.

There was a church once, before the apostasy took place, that knew the truth better than ye do, that said, She was rich, increased with goods, and had need of nothing; and yet wanted the tried gold, the white raiment, and the eye-salve. And if ye knew how aright to wait on the Lord, and receive counsel and light from him, perhaps ye might therein see also, that ye are destitute of and want the same things.

Now in that we testify to you that we have been in your state, and fully experienced it, and seen in the light of the Lord the truth thereof, and the defects thereof; and in love, and in the leadings of God's Spirit, are drawn to testify thereof to you, and have from him received the knowledge of the living way, which was made manifest before the apostasy, and is now again; and are taught and enabled by the Lord to walk with him therein, the Lord having led us into that, and brought us forth in that, from which all the apostates have erred, and out of which they all are; this should not be a thing slighted by you; but being a weighty testimony, and of great concernment to you, should be weightily considered of, and determined in you, by that which alone is able to decide it. Now if ye weigh this testimony by scriptures, and have not a true understanding of those scriptures from God, ye will but thereby err the more, and be the more confident and hardened

in your errors, and so go on in a kind of satisfaction and peace in kicking against the pricks.

And as for our confidence, we can truly say in the Spirit of truth, We know that we are of God, gathered unto him by the life and Spirit of his Son revealed in us; and we could eat our bread in secret, and drink the water of life out of our own cisterns silently, but that the Lord required us, and his love constraineth us, and it is due to the glorious work of his mercy and power towards us, to declare, in the seasons of his chusing, what the Lord hath done for our poor, distressed, mourning, wandering, undone souls. Now if others are confident without a cause; that doth not make void our confidence, which is grounded upon the truth; nor the testimony thereof, issuing forth from and in the truth: but that which is of God beareth and owneth it, and feeleth the work of his love and great power, and blesseth his name therefore.

As for those expressions, "It is enough for thee that Jesus Christ is thine," &c." so far as thou feelest union with him, in the principle of life which is of him, thou mayest say so truly. But is it not strange, that thou shouldst be of it, and not be able to know and own it, in this day of its manifestation; but call the light, which is spiritual and eternal (and gives the true and certain knowledge of Christ), natural? What! of God, of Christ (having received the Spirit, the living well) and yet not know the mystery of life within, nor its pure voice in this present day! but limit the unlimited One to a form of words formerly spoken by him! how do these things agree with what thou professest? Surely they are deeply in the mist, who know not Christ from antichrist; but fight against Christ and his light, as if it were of antichrist or nature. Now we are one with any of you (though ye know it not) so far as ye know and are of the truth, and feel true union with whatever is of God in you.

Thus in faithfulness to God, and in love to truth and tenderness to thee, I have given forth that which sprang in me towards thee. And indeed I singly breathe to the Lord in my spirit, that it may be serviceable in the hands of the Lord for thy good; even to shake that knowledge and sense which is not of him in thee (though thou strongly believest it to be of him), and so to bring thee to the infallible sense and experience of the true foundation, and to a fixed building and establishment in Spirit thereupon, in that light which is of the Father; that therein thou mayest own and partake of the ministration of the everlasting and pure power in thy present day and generation; which is now so dispensed, as it hath not been since the night of the apostasy. Blessed be his name, whose light shines, whose life is made manifest, whose power is risen out of, and reigns over, the darkness; whose love and mercy abounds in the hearts of the redeemed-ones, who abundantly partake of the covenant of life, and of the precious promises of the gospel, to the praise of the riches of the grace and mercy which were to be revealed in the ages to come after the apostasy, and are so revealed, and are

yet more to be revealed, to the increase of the glory of his name, and of the joy and consolation of his redeemed-ones; who find that to be God's power and wisdom, and mighty redemption to them, which to others is a stumbling-block, weakness, and foolishness: and he who ever was, and still is, the life, is once again become a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; who though they have longed after him, and breathed for him, and prayed that his kingdom might come; yet now, when he is come, they know him not, but are wise and strong in resisting and opposing him; which is much to their hurt and great danger, as the Lord God seeth in the light wherein he dwells, and as he hath given his children, who dwell with him in the same light, to see with his eye. And friends, take heed that thou turn not the edge of thy weapon, even of thy scripture-knowledge, against Christ (there were those that once did so); nor that thy table become thy snare: for that was the curse which lighted on those who opposed Christ's appearance in flesh; and it may also (in the just and most righteous judgment of God) befall those who oppose his appearance in spirit in this his day.

And as for what I have written unto thee, thou shalt one day witness that I have written to thee in true love, and in the true light and sense of truth: and if thou canst retire into that which is of God in thee, and receive the true sense and understanding there, thou wilt there feel it so now. And oh! that thou couldst distinguish between God's witness in thy heart, and the voice of thy understanding and gathered knowledge! that thou mightest receive a being, life, pure sense, and understanding, in that which is pure of God; that the gold might be separated from the dross, and there might come forth a vessel for the refiner!

25th of the 11th month,

I am a lover of souls, and an earnest desirer after their welfare; but especially of such as breathe after, and long for, communion with the Lord, in that which is living and pure,

ISAAC PENINGTON

A BRIEF

REPLY to thy ANIMADVERSIONS.

To the First.

A Man is justified upon account of Christ, of being in him, believing in him, obeying his gospel. All these have reference to justification, according to the soul's experience, and according to the scriptures, and none of them are to be excluded. God hath appointed Christ to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance, faith, and remission of sins; and in the exercise of that repentance and faith, the righteousness and justification is received. And the Lord condemns the unbeliever, because he believes not; and the disobedient, because he obeys not the gospel: and he also justifies the believer and the obedient, because of the faith and obedience of his Son which he finds in them. And in this faith, the righteousness, the pure righteousness, flows; the Spirit of the Lord covers; and it is not only the principle, but also the garment, of righteousness and salvation; yea, all that Christ did in the flesh comes in here, and the soul feels and partakes of the virtue, and value of it all, being found here. But out of this are the notions and imaginations of mens minds, upon and about scriptures concerning the thing; who indeed and in truth (as it really is) know it not.

To the Second.

There are two covenants, and there are works of each, works required by each. In the old covenant, obedience to the law of Moses is required. In the new covenant, believing in Christ (*this is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent*) and obedience to his gospel and Holy Spirit. Now these, and the works of the old, are not one and the same, nor have the same acceptance and justification with the Lord. Nay, though a man could perform all the law of Moses exactly, yet would he not be therein so justified in the sight of God as the believer is; his faith and obedience, which he receiveth from Christ, and performeth in the strength of his grace and new life, being of an higher kind, and more excellent nature, than man's fulfilling the law in his own natural capacity and principle can be. I am sorry thou hast no better a knowledge and favour of the things of the kingdom, than to testify a dislike of this distinction. And as for the Papists, we meddle not with them, farther than we are led by the Lord: for my part, I know not what they hold as to this thing.

To the Third.

God did threaten the Gentiles (wishing them to take heed of boasting against the Jews) that if they did not continue in the faith, and in the fear, they should be cut off, as the Jews were. Now there was a great and general departing from the faith, and answerably a general cutting off. And though life was reserved in a select number, in the wilderness; yet the true way of gathering into churches and the church-state fell. And now being fallen, the Lord alone is able to rebuild, as he built at first. Now men reading the scriptures of the glory of the former church-state, have been longing after it (which was good), but withal too forward to thrust themselves into it, and build by imitation, without the clear sight, leadings, and guidance of the Spirit; and so have not built up in the same life and power by which the building was at first, and can alone be truly raised again. Now the Lord being come forth in his power, and raising up his own building, the same Spirit that raiseth up that, testifieth against all the other, which are raised up without it. And indeed the testimony against the present churches and congregations gathered out of the power, is God's, not ours. But consider seriously; John had a reed given him to measure the temple, &c. when part was to be reserved for God, and part to be given to the Gentiles. But who gave you power to gather churches, or practise those which ye call church-ordinances? *Who hath required these things at your hands?* And where dost thou read, that the Gentiles did tread down the outward court after it was given them? They trod down the holy city indeed forty-two months.

To the Fourth.

So far as you see, hear, taste, feel any thing in the pure light of the truth, as it is in Jesus, we rejoice therein; and heartily desire the increase thereof in you: but we would not have you mistaken about these things.

To the Fifth.

Concerning the word or commandment which Moses speaks of, and which Paul said was the word of faith which they preached.

If the first covenant had been faultless, there had not been place left for a second. *For if there had been a law given, which would have given life, righteousness should have been by that law.* But notwithstanding the wonders which God did in Egypt and the wilderness, and the giving the law and ordinances, &c. yet the veil was upon them, and *the Lord had not given them an heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, to that very day,* Deut. xxix. 4. Well then; there was a necessity of a another covenant; and these words which Moses now speaks to them from God, were words concerning another covenant besides that made in Horeb.

But

But where is the commandment of this covenant? Where is the law of this covenant? Where is the Word of this covenant? It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea; *but the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.* And this nigh Word of the other covenant, whereby God circumciseth the heart, to love the Lord God with all the heart, is the Word eternal, and no other; who hath received this power of the Father, and none else hath received it: and in the obedience to him, his righteousness is revealed and received, and made the soul's, from faith to faith. And it is in vain for you to think to blind our eyes either concerning this scripture, or concerning the thing itself which this scripture testifies of; God having opened the eye and heart, which sees and knows, and which in the true light, which is from and of the Word, sees him who is invisible and eternal, even the life, holy power, wisdom, and righteousness, which was in and with the Father before the world was. And this was the Word, before it took up the body of flesh, and is still the Word, and no other; and its commandment is life eternal; in the pure faith whereof, and in the pure obedience whereto, he giveth life abundantly: but out of the faith and obedience thereto, he doth neither give life, nor the justification of life; but the deceits of the enemy there prevail in mens minds concerning these things.

Now had the Jews under the law come to this Word, they had by the light thereof understood the law, and by the power thereof fulfilled it. And when Christ and the apostles preached, had they that heard, felt this Word, they could not but in their hearts have believed him to be the Lord, and also have confessed his resurrection from the dead; which, in that day, it was a great thing to confess, being not revealed by flesh and blood; nor the testimony then easily swallowed by the fleshly and earthly part, but generally opposed by it. But now these things are received and acknowledged by multitudes without the power; and as so received, are of no value, nor can save; but the owning and receiving, and being born of the Spirit, life, and power (which was in him) saves, and gives such an acknowledgment of these things, as is of the life and power, and accepted with the Father.

But, alas! friend, how hast thou wrested and perverted this scripture, turning aside the intent of God's Spirit, and putting thine own meaning upon his words, striving to make them speak what thou wouldst have them! Is this reading of the scriptures in reverence, humility, and godly fear? Oh! that God would give thee a sense of what thou hast done herein! For neither Moses nor Paul doth thus restrain them, nor mention any such sort of people as thou speakest of; but thou, by thy exposition, makest void the mind of God, and the drift of his Spirit in the scriptures. If thou hast, in this wisdom and latitude of thy own spirit, read the scriptures, not know-
ing

ing God's Spirit to gird and limit thee from thine own apprehendings and conceivings, what kind of rule hast thou made to thyself out of them? Ah! friend, if thou knowest God's Spirit, keep to it; if thou knowest it not, wait for it to become thy guide and leader, and the opener of scriptures and the mysteries of the kingdom to thee.

The light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and the eternal Word or Son of God, is the same. And this light shining in the darkness, shineth and enlighteneth with the true light. And the end of its enlightening is, that therein men might feel the drawings of the Father, the strivings of his Spirit; and in the faith thereof, and subjection thereto, come out of the darkness.

Now the condemnation is not because Christ hath not sufficiently enlightened them, or that there goeth not sufficient power with his light to redeem from the darkness; but because men turn the deaf ear to him, will not hear him; but, in love to the darkness, hear the voice of him who dwells in the darkness. But the Spirit of Christ, who is in the light, and dwells in the light, who strives with the dark world by his light, is able to conquer and overcome the darkness. Yea, the Word of life, nigh in the mouth and heart, is able to overcome the power of death there, to quicken, to gather to God, to set the captive free, &c. And the reason why men perish, is not through God's insufficient visiting of them, but because of their turning from the measure of the manifestation of his Spirit. They despise the day of small things; they will not come to that wherein the life and virtue was hid, and so lose the day of their visitation, and miss of the good which God intended to them thereby.

And whereas thou sayest, "The light doth not, nor cannot, discover Christ, and his being raised from the dead, &c." I cannot but say, on the other hand, what doth discover them, but the light? How came the scriptures to declare of Christ? Was it not from the Spirit? And is not that same light still with the Spirit, by which the scriptures were given forth? And can he not give it forth without the letter, where he seeth need of it, and vouchsafeth so to do? But how can the vast unbelieving multitudes of the world experience what the light and Spirit of the Lord can do, being not subject to it, but rebelling against it, *Job xxiv. 13.* And why may not men now, by the light of the Spirit, come to know that Christ is come, dead, and risen, as well as these things were known and believed before the scriptures were written? Yet, if a man should not know the outward death of Christ, and his raising from the outward grave; yet being in the faith of the power (which whomsoever it toucheth and draweth to it, it redeems) that gives him a right to all that was done by Christ; for then he hath union with the thing which saves, and strength from it against that which destroys. Yea, there was a time when the disciples of Christ were in the faith, and yet neither knew nor believed his death and resurrection:

yea,

yea, Peter, with no small confidence, said, *Lord, this shall not be unto thee.* Matt. xvi. 22.

As touching that passage of renouncing the works not only of the old covenant, but even those of the new also, as filthy rags, that is manifestly unscriptural and unsavoury; the works of the new covenant being fruits of God's Holy Spirit, which he works in us and for us. If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation (where the old things are passed away); and he that walks after this rule, walks in the newness of the Spirit, and the Spirit moves, and lives, and works in him. Not I, but Christ in me. And as the root is holy, so is also the fruit. The fear which God puts into the heart is clean, and keeps the heart clean; and out of the good, and honest, and clean heart, comes good, honest, and clean fruit, which is not unclean, like filthy rags. Read *Isai. lxiv. 5.* and consider it, waiting on the Lord to open thine understanding. Were the works which the apostle speaks of, *Heb. xi.* and *Jam. ii. 24* to be reckoned as filthy rags?

Abraham was acquainted with the invisible eternal Word, and was turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and in his converted estate had the promise of the seed; and saw, with the rest of the prophets, through the day of his flesh to the day of his Spirit, *1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.*

David was a spiritual man, and knew the Word of the new covenant, which is a lantern to the feet, and a light to the paths, of the children of the new covenant, who witness and experience their way cleansed by taking heed thereto according to this Word. And the precepts, statutes, laws, commandments, ordinances, judgments, &c. of this Word are a mystery to all that are not acquainted with it. But they that are acquainted with it, and in the pure fear and humility wait upon it, they learn of it the way of its precepts, and are guided by the Spirit of the Lord in the way everlasting.

The wisdom which Solomon speaks of, is undoubtedly Christ, the Word eternal. It is much thou shouldst boggle at this. He is the Sun of the inward world, which enlightens the dark inward world; not that they should abide in the darkness, but by the virtue and power of his light come out of it. And friend; mark these following words, and wait upon the Lord for the true understanding of them. Till thou witness the inward Word, with the inward law and testimony thereof, and know its commandment to be a lamp, and its law a light, &c. thou canst never witness the perfect keeping and preservation from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of the strange woman; but wilt be apt to lust after her beauty in thy heart, and to be taken with her eye-lids. But if thou know and keep wisdom's commandments, thou wilt thereby witness life indeed, according to that saying of Christ, *If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death.* And Christ directed his apostles to wait for his Spirit to receive his sayings from, who teacheth not only the greatest, but the least, in the new covenant;

writing his law in their hearts, which law is light. And if any man hear the inward voice of wisdom, and turn at her reproofs, she will pour out her spirit unto him, she will make known her words unto him.

The same thing that teaches to do justly, and love mercy, teacheth also to walk humbly with the Lord. It is the same grace which brings salvation, which teacheth to live godlily, that teacheth also to live soberly and righteously. What I had in my former profession and congregational way, the Lord brake by a mighty hand; but yet in tender mercy he was with me, preserving me in the midst of the storms, and floods, and roarings of the enemy upon me, till his fresh visiting of me. And he visited me with his own Spirit, with the eternal light, life, and power thereof; and I know it to be the same thing which had been with me from the beginning; yea, the child, being quickened and raised out of the grave, presently knew its Father, and cannot but honour and bear testimony to that appearance of truth, wherewith his Father visited him, and wherein he hath felt the renewing and restoring of his former work. And they that knew me formerly, before the Lord dashed me to pieces, could and did witness, that the Lord had given me true humility, and my soul did witness a walking with him in the humility which he gave me. And now I witness from him, in this precious dispensation of his life and power, the very same humility (and blessed be his name, with great increase), and a fresh walking with him therein, in a fresh sense and meltings and bowings of spirit before him night and day. I do confess I took it to be a natural thing, and overlooked and despised it, till the Lord opened my understanding, and shewed me what it was, and how he wrought by it, and that it was a mystery hid from all, but those to whom he revealed it. And indeed I do hang daily upon the Lord in this for life and power, and am very weak without, but strong as it pleaseth the Father to manifest himself in me, and to breathe upon me through it; yea, indeed, my life, peace, rest, hope, joy, delight, &c. is a continual gift from the Father of spirits, who hath manifested himself near unto me, and shewn me his dwelling-place. And I am satisfied that the Spirit of the Lord, by his immediate light, is able to reach the darkest heart in the darkest part of the world, and to turn his mind to, and give him belief in, that which saves, and to save him thereby.

The word of faith which the apostles preached, and the word of life eternal, and the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, differ not, but are the same; and the light wherewith he enlightens them, that they might believe in him who enlighteneth, is of the same nature with the Enlightener, and sufficient to guide them to the faith of him. But friend; take heed of reproaching the truth. Though thou mayest do it ignorantly, yet it is not wholly excusable. Hast thou heard the preaching which thou speakest thus slightly of? If thou hast not, surely thou shouldest have heard and considered, before thou hadst judged. Thou settest up
thine

thine own understanding, and a judgment according to the appearance of things to thee, instead of the true and righteous judgment; therein exposing thyself to the righteous judgment of the Lord, who judgeth in truth and righteousness, and far otherwise in this matter than thou dost.

Christ is the pearl of price, or treasure hid in a field. The field is the world. The word is in man's heart. And yet this mystery was hid from ages and generations; and the kingdom which the Pharisees sought, was within them; who were as far from any sense and understanding of it, as the Gentiles; and so though it was within them, yet they were without it; they had no knowledge, no understanding, no sense of it, had reaped no benefit by it, but were enemies and alienated in their minds from it. Ah! what palate and understanding is that, to which this is unspiritual and unfavoury? But how bold and presumptuous, do mens apprehensions (which they take up from the letter of the scriptures, without the light and leading of God's Spirit) make them, even to fly in the face of that which is certainly known, witnessed, and experienced to be of God, as well as held forth in the scriptures, as *Col. i. 27*, see the Greek.

As to those harsh expressions, vilifying the truth of our God, and the conversion to him thereby; I shall only say this; well, friend, go on; reproach us and our testimony, and the truth of our God, as being able to lead us no further than morality, &c. we assuredly know and experience, and faithfully testify as in God's sight, that it hath led us further into the mystery and power of life, and into union and fellowship with the Father and the Son, than your doctrines ever have done or can do. For the apprehensions of man upon scriptures are passing away, and the pure truth itself, which the scriptures testify of, is already revealed, and further to be revealed, and to have the glory.

Ye think we set up a natural light, and esteem it spiritual; but we are taught of God to distinguish, understandingly and experimentally, between nature, and him from whom nature came; who is the word of life, the Lord God of life, besides whom there is no Saviour; who is near to every man to warn him of, turn him and deliver him from, the devourer and oppressor of the soul. Now though the vessels in which the light shines be natural, and filled with darkness, and become darkness in the darkness; yet the Discoverer, Reprover, and Checker thereof, which giveth the living sound in the vessel, is spiritual; even the Spirit of the Lord God, which striveth with fallen man in the midst of his darkness and captivity at seasons, according to his good pleasure. This the Shepherd of our souls hath taught us, opening our ears, and causing us to hear and know his voice, and to learn of him; who is truth, and speaketh truth; who is life and Spirit, and giveth of his own eternal life and Spirit to his children.

To the Sixth.

What others have been I know not; but this I know concerning myself, that I was settled firmly in the doctrines which ye now own, and in the congregational way of worship, till the Lord smote me and brake me to pieces. Which such as I did converse with (to wit, teachers, and others of esteem in that way) professed they could not conceive the ground of; but said it was a prerogative case, and did not doubt but the issue thereof would be good unto me. But what if the sheep were scattered, before the Shepherd came to gather them? What if they were wandering from mountain to hill, seeking their resting place? What if they went mourning up and down from one watchman to another, from one sort of people to another, inquiring after their beloved? Did this make them unfit to be pitied and visited by the Shepherd? What sort did Christ gather in the days of his flesh? Were they not despised of the wise, learned, settled ones (in their knowledge of the law and prophets)? But blessed be the Lord, who hath now manifestly revealed the foundation, and the kingdom that can never be shaken, and in his mercy and tender love, and by his power, fixed them thereon; that they know in whom they have believed, and how they came to believe; and have taken up the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein the power is manifested to crucify that, which cannot otherwise be crucified.

The *Seventh* hath been largely spoken to already.

To the Eighth.

The Lord God knoweth, that it is not in my heart to judge or set at nought any man; but in faithfulness to God, and in tender love to souls, to testify to others what I have seen in his light, as he requireth of me. And is this setting them at nought? It is true, they cannot believe nor receive the testimony in the state wherein they stand; but that doth not disannul or weaken it; but truth and its testimony stands, notwithstanding their rejecting and rising up against it.

To the first particularly. To own and contend earnestly for the scriptures aright, is good; but it was not good formerly to set up the writings of Moses and the prophets above and against Christ; nor is it good now to set up the scriptures above the Spirit, or to make them the tryer instead of the anointing, *John ii. 27.* for the scriptures came from the Spirit, and they testify of the Spirit; and the Spirit is to be received and to dwell in the soul as in its temple: and here the King and Law-giver of the church (with the balance of the sanctuary) is indeed known. And he that receives the Spirit is to live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and in the light of the New Jerusalem; which light is eternal, discovering, dispossessing, and working out the darkness, and so taking up its place.

Now though ye may aim at having things concerning churches, and church-worship, regulated according to the scriptures; yet ye may easily err therein

therein, and cannot but err therein, if your understandings be not opened and kept open by the Spirit; yea, ye may not wait for the Spirit's gathering and building, but may gather of yourselves, and build of yourselves; whereas the apostles were to wait for the power from on high to do their work with. And were your eyes truly opened, ye would quickly and easily see, that neither your preaching nor praying is at all like theirs. They spake what they received from the Spirit; ye, what ye apprehend and conceive concerning words spoken of by the Spirit. This is very short of speaking as God's oracles. And one sort of you conceives thus, and another thus, concerning the scriptures, &c.

To the second. Till ye know the Spirit, and come to the true waiting upon the Spirit, and understand his voice, ye can never recover the form of sound words by reading the scriptures; but will be liable to be setting up your own conceivings and apprehensions, instead of the truth itself. And till ye have the true understanding of the Spirit, ye cannot but also err concerning the power, and about your experiences of things; and so will be continually in great danger of being deceived, and of deceiving one another's souls.

To the third. Ye have a notion about Christ's active and passive obedience being imputed to the soul as its righteousness, which the scriptures speak not; and which manifests that ye do not know how the righteousness is revealed, and how the Son is made of God unto them righteousness, who wait upon him in the faith, and obey his gospel. For the righteousness is revealed in the faith, and is further and further made the soul's, in and by the faith.

To the Ninth.

God is my witness (whom I worship in spirit, and in whose fear I write and speak) that I dearly love you; and in the truth and dearneſs of love, earnestly desire concerning you, that ye may not mistake about Christ, his Spirit, his scriptures; about faith, love, mortification; and about the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom, or any other spiritual thing; but may know, experience, and enjoy the truth and substance of things, as they are in Jesus. Now, if ye know, and have received, the true living faith, and witness the powerful, purifying virtue of it, which God hath given to overcome the world, and the wicked one with; how comes it about that there is such a belief in you, that it can never do its work perfectly in this world, but only in part? Surely this belief is not of, or from, the true faith; nor to the honour of him that hath given it. For the spiritual weapons are mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strong-holds, and bringing all (even every thought) into subjection to Christ.

To

To the Tenth.

That God did as much for Judas as for Peter, is not our doctrine: for God giveth more or less out of his rich treasury, according to his own good pleasure. But the unprofitable servant had also a talent given him, which he did not improve, but hid it in a napkin; and his Lord condemned him therefore. There were others had talents likewise, which they did improve, and their Lord accepted and justified them therein; saying, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter into the joy of thy Lord.*

Now is there just ground for any of these servants to boast and say, the other had a talent as well as I; but I made myself to differ; I improved my talent; whereas he did not? The true Jew doth believe, doth obey the gospel, and hath praise of God (he that hateth the light, doth not believe nor obey); and yet he seeth no ground of boasting: for it was not he, of himself, but the grace and power of the Lord, wrought all in him. And what is done in, and by, and through the power of the Lord; the honour and glory thereof properly belongs to the Lord. Yea, he that is in the true faith, feels that which excludes boasting, and keeps in the sense of the love and mercy. Oh! that thou knewest a limit and check to this wisdom, and these reasonings in thee, which are not of, but against, the truth; as that light which thou despisest would manifest to thee, if thou knewest the nature and virtue of it, and didst cleave unto it. In this wisdom and understanding thou mayest read much, and comprehend much, and be greatly taken with thine apprehensions upon scriptures; but it is shut out of the true knowledge of them, and out of the Spirit and power of life, which they that wrote them were in, and witnessed of.

As for free-will; we own no such thing as man's free-will to good in the fallen estate. But the Spirit of the Lord changeth and reneweth the will in the day of his power; and whoever he striveth with, and draweth, may come in the drawing; virtue issuing out with the drawing from him that draweth. And this is not the condemnation, that men *cannot* come to the Son, that they might have life; but that they *do* not come; that they *do not* turn, at the reproof of his wisdom, from that which he stands ready to turn them from.

There may be high admirations concerning God and his love, in the natural part; which we have known, and are made able in the Lord to judge of, since he hath taught us to distinguish of things: and this is chaffy in all sorts of men. But there is a feeling of the pure nature of heavenly love, and a sinking therein into the deep sense thereof; and an acknowledging of it to God, in the humility, in the fear, in the Spirit, and in the power. Now this is indeed from the beloved, and accepted with God in the beloved. And in this his children, who are stripped of their own ability of admiring and loving, are taught of him to love and admire him,

him, being gathered out of that which is natural of man, into that which is spiritual, and of God.

As for the Four Queries at the close, which I propounded in love, and for advantage to thee; it seemeth to me strange thou shouldst say thou wouldst speak to the sense of them, and yet so waive the main drift and plain sense.

The First was, Concerning Christ's being spiritually born of his church; to which thou hast said nothing at all, but that the first Christians and churches were very glorious, &c. Which they also can own, who have denied the faith, and are not in the truth.

To the Second thou hast answered as little, nor rightly according to the letter, putting in the dragon instead of the beast.

Thy Third and Fourth are also short, and not directly to the thing; but I wrote not to contend. The Lord God shew thee mercy, bring down the wrong wisdom in thee, bring thee into a capacity of knowing and receiving his pure living truth, that thou mayest not witness or fight against him; but, in and by his Spirit, understand the scriptures aright, and witness for him.

Nineteenth of the Twelfth Month, 1667.

I. P.

POST.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THERE is a word of advice in my heart to thee, which it behoveth thee seriously and uprightly to wait on the Lord, to be made able to weigh and consider aright; it is this. Take heed of setting up the letter above or against the Spirit (for that is not right in the sight of God); and take heed also of setting up thine own wisdom, conceivings, and apprehensions above both; for that is a dangerous way of erring, and may prove a great snare to thy soul; as it hath been formerly, and is at this day to many. If ye had known what this meaneth (said Christ) *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. We own the scriptures truly and singly, being taught of God so to do, and do not hold forth any thing contrary thereto, or deny any thing therein contained; but are witnesses (living witnesses) of the truths expressed and related therein; but mens meanings and conceivings thereupon (who, though they will acknowledge, that a man cannot understand the scriptures without the Spirit, yet will venture, in their own wisdom, spirit, and understanding, to expound and give meanings) we cannot own, nor them, in such their apprehensions and practices.

That in thee, or any, which breathes after the Lord, we have unity with, but that wisdom and comprehension which is above it, and a veil over it, and contrary to its nature, and which is a limit and bond to the precious seed, we cannot have unity with, because it is of the same nature with that which the Lord hath condemned and destroyed in us, and he will not suffer it to live in others, where his life and power prevails.

7 AP 59

A FEW
EXPERIENCES

Concerning some of the

WEIGHTY THINGS

RELATING TO

G O D's

EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

Given forth in true and tender Love, for the Help of any such of the
Race of the true Travellers as may stand in need thereof,

B Y

ISAAC PENINGTON.

Vol. II.

Q q q

THE

T H E
P R E C E.

IT hath pleased the Lord to unseal and open the fountain of life in the midst of his heritage, so that in his light do they see light, and in his life do they reap and enjoy life. And the precious promises are fulfilled in the midst of them, of sending the Comforter, and pouring out of the Holy Spirit, so that he that believeth, "out of his belly do flow rivers of living water." Yea, the Lord hath a vineyard, which he keepeth night and day (lest any hurt it), and watereth every moment. Oh! the streams of life, the streams of love, the streams of grace, the streams of mercy, the streams of peace, the streams of joy and consolation, which flow from him into the bosoms of his children! Indeed grace, and mercy, and peace are multiplied from God our Father, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ daily, inasmuch as that saying of Christ to his disciples (*John* xiv. 26, 27.) is now fulfilled, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you," &c. The Father, in his love, hath brought us to the Son; and the Son, in the same love, hath brought us back to the Father; and now the love flows from the Father in and through the Son, most naturally and abundantly. And where the heart is circumcised, and much forgiven, there love returns back most truly and abundantly; so that the Lord our God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, is loved with all the heart, and with all the soul, and nothing is thought too good to sacrifice to him, nor nothing too much to suffer for him. Oh! the pure love that springs and flows between the heavenly Father and the spiritual child! The best love that is to be found in this world (in the men of the world) is not worthy to be a shadow of it. God is love, and his children are of him, and partake of, and dwell in, the same love; though the enmity, and highest wisdom of this world, know them not; as it never could know the children of the true wisdom.

Now from this fountain do not only issue springs and streams of life to refresh our own hearts; but testimonies concerning the life which we feel
and

P R E F A C E.

cccclxxxiii

and partake of, and concerning our travels from the dark land through the valley of tears (where he that gave us life was our well) towards our resting-place.

These also spring up in us for the sakes of others; of which nature are the things which follow, in this little treatise. For not for my own sake only did they spring up in me, but to signify to others of the mercy the Lord hath shewn me, and the way wherein he hath led me, and what he hath given me to taste of and experience in the way; which will answer every true palate, every palate that is seasoned with life, and with true experience. And having received them from the Lord for this very end, to hold them forth to others, in love and in tenderness of spirit my heart is freely given up to him therein; not aiming at any thing thereby but his glory singly, and the good of such souls to whom he shall please to extend favour and shew mercy, in opening the heavenly mystery of life and salvation.

I have often said in my heart, *Who hath begotten me there? Who would have said that Sarah should have given children suck?* My wound was deep, and seemed incurable; but blessed be the Lord, who hath made known to me the physician of value, for whom no disease is too hard, but he is able to cure every sickness, and to relieve and rescue all that are captived and oppressed by the devil, that come unto him, and wait upon him, in the way of his righteous judgments and most tender mercies. For after all my religion and deep exercises, and inward experiences and knowledge, I came to such a loss of what I once had, that I sensibly felt I knew not the Lord, and lay continually groaning and mourning after him, and deeply afflicted for want of him. Oh! the pure, living, and precious life, and sweet presence of my God, that my soul wanted! insomuch as my moisture was turned into the drought of summer, and my bones grown dry and withered! But at length the Lord, in his goodness (Oh! blessed for ever be his name!) breathed upon the dry bones, and I felt life enter from him into me, and the days of deep sorrow and distress were at length forgotten, because a heavenly birth was at length conceived and brought forth. And now where is the sackcloth? Where are the ashes? Oh! there is beauty in life, instead of the ashes in the state without life; and the garment of praise, instead of the spirit of heaviness! O glory, glory, to the binder up of the bruised and broken-ones, to the Redeemer of the captives, to the repairer of the breaches, to the builder up of the wasted and desolate-ones! Glory to his tender mercy, glory to his grace, glory to his love, glory to his wisdom, glory to his power, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A F E W

E X P E R I E N C E S, &c.

I.

A faithful Testimony concerning the True and Pure
Way of Life; with Breatheings for such as have Desires
after it, and yet are Strangers to it.

THIS hath been the cry of my soul from my childhood, even after holiness, after the presence of the Lord, after union with him, after the nature and image of his Son, after a separation from what was contrary to him, and a being brought forth in the power of his life.

Now blessed be the Lord, that is revealed which answers the cry; which so far as my soul comes to partake of, it is refreshed and satisfied with the supply of that, which it thirsted and cried after.

And all that have felt the true cry, Oh! that they might also be taught of God, and learn aright how to wait upon him, and to walk humbly and in fear before him, that nothing might come between them and the cry of their souls; but they might be led by him into the enjoyment and possession of that, which the true birth (which is born of the Spirit, and is Spirit) naturally longs after.

Now truly there is no other way to life and satisfaction, than by believing in that power, and following that power, which raised Christ from the dead; for that is to work the work in all that are saved. To feel this power revealed within, to have the mind turned to this power, to follow this power in the regenerating work and path, is the way to partake of its virtue, and to experience the redemption which is thereby and therefrom.

And he that is born of the Spirit, and hath his eye opened by the Spirit, and daily exercised thereby; he knoweth the Spirit, and is acquainted with
his

his stirrings and movings, and taught of God to distinguish them from the evil spirit, its stirrings and movings; and so doth not quench the Spirit of God, nor grieve it when it moves; nor give way to the other spirit, when it moves and allures.

Now the spirit of deceit allures and guides men not so much by outward rules, as by an inward evil nature, and by the law of sin and death. So the Spirit of truth leads into truth, by the newness and power of its own life revealed in the heart, by the pure instinct of life within, and by the law of God written in the nature of the new creature, which is nearer than words without. For God blots out of the hearts of his what Satan had written there, and writes by the finger of his Spirit what he would have the new-born read there; and indeed there is a kingdom of life, of righteousness, of true peace, and joy (yea, of the holy power and wisdom of the Most High), for his children (which are born of his Spirit, and spring up of the immortal seed) to read.

Oh! why should mens eyes be closed, and their hearts hardened against the truth! Why should they cry up Christ in words, and cry out against his life and power where it is revealed! Is this to kiss the Son? Can such chuse (who are guilty of this) but perish in the way of their souls travels? And how many must needs perish in their resisting the power of truth, and precious testimony of God's Holy Spirit (in this our day) tending to their rescue and salvation from that which captivates and destroys?

Christ came to destroy sin, he having received power from his Father so to do. He knoweth it to be of a destroying nature, and that it will destroy the soul, where it is not by the power of life consumed and destroyed in the soul. Oh! most precious to us is that visitation of truth, light, life, and power, which searcheth out and discovereth sin to the very root, and also destroys it! Oh! glorious is that axe of the Lord Jesus Christ which is laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and is daily hewing at and cutting it down, that it might cumber the ground no more; but that the heart might become good earth, sanctified earth, circumcised by the Lord to bring forth good fruit, good grapes, a good increase of the good seed of life to the good husbandman, who is worthy to reap, even in this world, the grace and mercy, love and goodness, wisdom and power, &c. which he plentifully soweth in the spirits of *his* daily. Glory to his name over all for ever, who hath exalted, exalteth, and will exalt, that which the several sorts of high professors, in their wisdom, trample upon and despise.

II.

Concerning the perfecting of God's Work in the Heart.

IS it not the will of God that his people and children should be sanctified throughout, in soul, in body, in spirit?

Is it not the will of Christ that his disciples should be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect?

Did he not bid them pray, *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*? And would he never have them believe and expect that it should be done in earth, as it is in heaven?

Doth not he who hath the true, pure, living hope (which anchors within the veil) purify himself, even as He is pure?

Is not this the way to enjoy the promises of God's holy presence (who tabernacleth in his people that are cleansed and sanctified) to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear? Will God dwell in an unholy temple? Will he dwell where sin dwells? He may indeed to such, when at any time they are tender, and truly melted before him, be to them as a wayfaring man that tarries for a night; but he will not take up his abode there, walk there, sup there, and give them to sup with him?

Hath not Christ received all power both in heaven and earth from his Father? Is not this the end of receiving his power, to bring down the soul's enemies, and to purify and sanctify his church, that it may be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing? Is he not the captain of our salvation, anointed to fight the battles of the Lord? Where is the fight? Where is the strong man to be found, cast out, his goods spoiled, and the house emptied of him, and all that belongs to him? Is not Christ the author of faith, the finisher of faith; and doth not he carry on the work of faith with power? And what is the work of faith? Is it not to fight with, and overcome, sin; to be too hard for the enemy at all his weapons? Is there not a whole armour of light, life, and salvation prepared? What is it prepared for? Is it not that the children of light should be wholly armed with it? Were there never any wholly armed with it; or can the enemy prevail on those that are wholly armed with it? Are those that are armed with it afraid of the enemy, his power, his snares, his wiles? Or are they bold in the faith, following on, in the spiritual battles, him who rideth before them, conquering, and to conquer?

Oh! that mens eyes were opened by the Lord! then might they see the glory of truth, in the pure light which shines from God's holy mountain; and such dark doctrines of the night (which tend to the dishonour of Christ, his power, and love, and to the upholding of the enemy's kingdom) would pass away, and prevail no more in the hearts of any that truly fear the Lord;

Lord; but they would quietly wait and hope for his salvation, that by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, they might be made free from the law of sin and death, and not always be subject thereto! For all whom the Son maketh free, they are free indeed; and being made free by him, may serve God in freedom of Spirit, without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their lives. And then they know the power and virtue of the new covenant, and the defence which is thereby, where the wing of the Almighty overshadows, and his salvation (revealed therein) is experienced for a sufficient wall and bulwark against the enemy.

III.

Concerning the true Christ, how it may be certainly and infallibly known which is he.

WHILE people were in expectation and mused in their hearts concerning John, whether he were the Christ or no, John answers the case, and tells them how they might discern and know the true Christ. It is not he that baptizeth with water, but he *that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost and with fire*. He *whose fan is in his hand*, wherewith he cometh thoroughly to purge his floor, gathering the wheat into his garner, and burning the chaff with fire unquenchable. Now he that knoweth him that doth this work, and experienceth him doing this work in him, doth he not know Christ? Oh! is it not precious to be baptized by him whom God hath appointed to baptize? Oh! the fan, the precious fan, wherewith Christ (who is the power and wisdom of God) separates the precious from the vile, severs the wheat and the chaff, gathers the wheat into the precious treasury, and lets out the unquenchable fire upon the chaff! *Our God is a consuming fire*, saith the apostle. *To what is he a consuming fire?* Is it not to the chaffy, earthy, drossy nature in men and women? Why bring the chaff near to the fire, will it not burn it up? And then (as that is burnt up and consumed) that which is pure, that which is upright, that which is tender, that which is born of God, can dwell with, and delight in, the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings. For God is not terrible to the child which is born of him, to him who is brought forth in the image and Spirit of his Son; but to the transgressing nature, to the seed of evil-doers, which are naturally inclined to do evil, and every day doing evil, he is terrible for evermore. Oh! blessed are they who believe in that power, and experience that power near, which raised Christ from the dead, and are baptized with his baptism! They have access to God: for so the true Jews have been inwardly cleansed and kept clean; but the unclean, who have only a notion of Christ's blood, and of his righteousness, but are not washed thereby, nor clothed therewith, nor ever knew what it was to put off the filthy garment, and to put on the white raiment, they may pray in their own wills and spirits; but they know not what it is to draw nigh to God in the Spirit and life of his Son,

Son, and so are yet to learn what it is to pray to the Father in the name of Christ. For none truly know Christ, but they who truly know and are led by his infallible Spirit. *They that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his*; and they that have his Spirit, have that which is infallible. It is one thing to have words spoken concerning Christ, or formerly by Christ; another thing to have the infallible Spirit itself; to be infallibly born of the Spirit, and brought up in the light and life of the Spirit, that he may certainly know the Shepherd's voice from the voice of every strange spirit.

IV.

Some QUERIES to such as affirm the Scriptures to be the only Rule, and deny the Spirit, the Seed of the Kingdom, the new Covenant, the holy Leaven of Life, the Law written in the Heart, to be the Rule of the Children of the new Covenant.

Query 1. **H**OW are the scriptures the rule; or which of the scriptures are the rule? Are the whole scriptures the rule, from the beginning of *Genesis* to the *Revelations*? Or are some parts of them the rule, some others not? If some parts of them be the rule, and some not, which parts are the rule, and which are not the rule? As to instance, in the book of *Job*; his friends spake many words concerning God, which were not so right as Job's, *Job* xlii. And also Job himself, in some of his words and speeches, darkened counsel by words without knowledge, as he himself confessed, *Job* xlii. 3. Now which of Job's friends words are the rule, and which not; and which of Job's words are the rule, and which not?

Query 2. Moses was the minister of the old covenant (for he ministered to the Jews the old covenant, which was glorious in its day); but he was not the minister of the new covenant. Now the new covenant, and ministration thereof, exceeds the old in glory. The writing of the law inwardly in the tables of the heart, is a more glorious ministration than the writing of it outwardly in tables of stone. Now were Moses's words to the Jews under the old covenant intended by God to be the rule of the children of light under the new covenant? Shall the words of that ministration, which was to pass away, be the rule of the children of that ministration which is to abide for ever?

Query 3. Did Moses say, That when Christ came, my words which I speak or write shall be your rule, or part of your rule? Or did he not rather say, *When God raiseth up that prophet, him shall ye hear in all things*? Is there any one that is truly a sheep, who is not so made by him who gives life to the soul? And after he is made alive, and knows the shepherd's voice, is he not to hear his voice for ever, who gives life eternal, and who leads into the pastures of life, and to the pure still waters, all that hear his voice and follow him? Read *John* xiv. 3, 4. and *Acts* iii. 22. and consider.

Query

Query 4. Was not John as great, if not greater than Moses? Had ever any the honour besides him to be the immediate forerunner and preparer of the way, and to point to the Lamb of God as he did? And yet was not he to decrease in his ministry (it being not the gospel ministration of the Spirit and power, as Christ's was) and Christ to increase in his gospel-ministration? Is not the least in the kingdom greater than John? And are not all that are quickened by Christ, and follow him, led by him into the kingdom? And who can give the rule of life in the kingdom but the king thereof? In the last days doth not the Lord speak to his people by his Son? And is not he faithful in all his house, as a son, to give the law and rule of life to them in Christ?

Query 5. Are not all that are soldiers and subjects under Christ to follow him, their Lord and Captain, whithersoever he goes or rules? How can they know whither he goes or rules, but by an inward eye and ear fixed upon, and open to him? So that when once they know his Spirit (the voice of his Spirit, as his true sheep do), his movings, his drawings, his leadings, his going before, is their rule to follow. And they are not to grieve or quench his Spirit, in drawing back from any thing that he leads and draws them to.

Query 6. Is not Christ the way, the truth, the life, the living way, the living truth? Is not the living way the rule to them that live? Is not the truth itself the rule of all that are true? What should rule and guide the spiritual man, that is born of the Spirit, but the wisdom of the Spirit, but the oracle of God manifested in his temple and sanctuary? That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, in which the Spirit is to dwell; and he in whom he dwells is to be ruled by him.

Query 7. What is that which the apostle calls the rule, *Gal. vi. 15, 16.* which if a man walk according to, peace will be upon him? Is it not the Word, power, and wisdom of God? Doth not he that walketh according to that, walk in the newness of the Spirit? Doth not he that walketh out of that, walk in the oldness of the letter at the best? Doth not he that believeth according to that, hopeth according to that, prayeth according to that; I say, doth not he believe, hope, and pray according to the rule? Doth not he that believeth, hopeth, prayeth otherwise (though ever so zealously and affectionately), yet, at best, can any better be said of it, but that it is but in the oldness of the letter, and so is not in the right way which God requires in the gospel-covenant?

Query 8. Is not the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus the law of the new covenant? And is not that the rule to the children of the new covenant? Is not the truth which makes free, the way and rule to them who are made free by it? Is the letter or Spirit the rule under the ministration of the Spirit? Let that which is sensible, and which feels and knows the truth and way of life (as it is in Jesus) answer. Men may search the scrip-

tures, and yet not come to Christ for life; and men may get descriptions and a knowledge of things out of the scriptures, and yet not receive from him the rule of the new life.

V.

Concerning the Light, wherewith Christ the Life enlighteneth every Man.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. JOHN i. 4, 5.

WHAT is the darkness which comprehendeth not the light? Is it not man in the unregenerate state? *Ye were darkness*, saith the apostle, speaking concerning them as they had been in that state.

Now it pleaseth the Lord that in this darkness his pure light should shine, to gather man out of the darkness. For unless light should shine on man in his dark state, he could never be gathered out of it; but he that is turned to the light, and followeth it, cannot abide in the darkness; but cometh into that which gathereth and preserveth the mind out of it.

But of what nature is this light, which shineth in man in his dark state? It is of a living nature; it is light which flows from life; it is light which hath life in it; it is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Word eternal, which is the light of men. And he who cometh to the true understanding, may thereby distinguish it from all other lights whatsoever.

There is a vast difference between it and the reason and understanding of a man: for the natural man, with his understanding, is dead; but this is living and powerfully operating in man, as it finds entrance, and as his mind is joined to it. He that is dead, indeed, knows it not; but he that is alive unto God, feels the virtue of it. This light is above all gathered knowledge whatsoever, and above all descriptions of things whatsoever: for it is the thing itself, even of the nature of him from whom it flows. A man may get a notion from this into his mind, which he may retain the dead knowledge of, yea, his notion may quickly be dead in them; but he that dwells in the thing itself, knows that, and dwells in that which never dies.

VI.

A few Words further concerning Perfection.

WHAT was the intent of God in commending Job to Satan for a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil? Was it not to represent him as a person whom he could not make any breach upon, or prevail upon to sin? Thou hast been ranging up and down the earth,

earth, tempting many, defiling many; what sayest thou to my servant Job, Satan, is not he perfect? Is not he upright to me in his heart, and all his ways? Canst thou make any breach upon him?

What saith Satan hereto? Doth he object any sin against Job? He is the accuser of the brethren; and if he have wherewith to accuse, he will not fail to lay it to their charge, even before the throne of God. But what hath he to say against Job? What can he object (either against his uprightness, or against his perfection) to the Lord? Oh! says he, thou hast set an hedge about him. He serves thee indeed perfectly and uprightly; I confess I have nothing to lay to his charge: but doth he serve thee for nought? But take away thy hedge, suffer me to winnow him, and thou shalt quickly see I shall have somewhat to lay to his charge, and that no small matter neither: for do but take away thy blessing from him, wherewith thou hast so abundantly blessed him, and he will soon curse thee to thy face.

Well, the Lord giveth him leave to try if he can stain Job's uprightness and perfection: and now begins the trial, whether the devil's temptations shall bring him to sin, or the fear of the Lord prevail to preserve him from sin.

First, the devil hath power to touch all he hath; which he soon doth.

What doth this produce? Doth he sin against the Lord, doth he murmur, doth he blaspheme, as the devil had said? No; he fell on the ground and worshipped, acknowledging all to be the Lord's, and blessing his name. So that, in all this sore affliction, he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly, *Job. i. 20, 21, 22.*

But the commendation which God had given him, of being a perfect and upright man, fearing God and eschewing evil, still remains and stands good against Satan, *chap. ii. iii.*

Satan gets leave to try him yet further, insinuating against him, that if he may have liberty to smite his body, he shall easily prevail upon him to sin; not being able at present to bring in any plea against his perfection and uprightness, against his fearing God and eschewing evil. But this hath the same success with the former; for he could not bring Job to sin with his lips, *ver. 10.*

Now mind, Can any man, that hath his heart made upright by the Lord, keep that integrity, and sin? Is not every sin a departing from the purity, from the integrity? Was not every transgression against the first covenant, out of the first covenant, even a departing from the limits of it? Is not every transgression of the second covenant a departing out of the limits of the second covenant? He that abideth in Christ, doth he sin? Can he sin? Doth not he that sins depart out of his light, out of his life, out of his power, into the darkness, into the death, into the temptation of the enemy? Is it not promised, I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me: while the fear which God puts into the heart abides there, can that man sin? Doth not the pure fear cleanse the heart, and

keep it clean, that the conscience may be void of offence, both towards God and man? Is the conscience void of offence, where sin is committed either against God or man? When the blood flows in the pure light, doth it not wash? Doth it not wash clean? Doth it not make whiter than the snow? When sin is entered into afterwards, and committed again, doth it not defile? Oh! read in the true sense, in the true experience, with the true understanding, which God gives.

VII.

Concerning Imputation of Righteousness.

THE scripture saith, that Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness; and that so it shall be also to all that believe as he did, even in the same power which he believed in, *Rom. iv. 23, 24.*

Now thus we witness the thing: our minds being turned from sin, and turned to the pure gift of God, that works a change in us. Herein we feel faith spring up, which fastens our spirits to the power of life; and then we feel that (in the power of life) flow upon our spirits, which washeth away our sin; and all that is done in this holy and righteous faith, is of the holy, righteous life and power, and accepted with the Lord; and that which condemns sin in us, never condemns any work which is wrought in God, but justifies it. So that the root of sin, with all that flows from it, is condemned by the righteous principle of life; but the root of holiness, with all that flows from it, is justified. And this is our righteousness, even Christ the holy power of life, who condemns and casts out sin: and it is great joy to any of us to feel the root of sin struck at, and condemned by his power, and him casting sin out of us, and the root of righteousness growing up in us, and bearing us, and causing us to bring forth fruit to God. And here we sensibly find we have right to the scriptures, to the promises, to all that Christ did and suffered for us, and witness the propitiation by and through him, and bless God for all the dispensations of life, wherein he hath appeared to the children of men in any age, which were all glorious and excellent in their season; but the dispensation of the Spirit is the standing dispensation, which excels in glory, which Christ, in the days of his flesh, pointed his disciples to wait for, which his going away was to make way for. This dispensation was revealed and set up before the apostasy from the life and Spirit of the apostles, and is again revealed and set up in power and great glory, after the long night of apostasy; blessed be the name of the Lord for ever. For the darkness is already passed away from many spirits, and the true light again shineth. Glory in the highest to the God of life and glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

VIII.

Some QUERIES concerning the Time and Work of Reformation.

Query 1. **W**HAT did the time of Reformation and Substance (spoken, of *Heb. ix. 10.*) signify and point at in relation to the mystery? Was it not for the bringing in of the gospel; the day of Christ's Spirit and power; the day of his inward renewing and reforming; the day of his taking his fan into his hand, to purge his floor; the laying his axe to the root of the corrupt tree, that he may destroy the works of the devil in mens hearts, casting down and plucking up what his heavenly Father hath not planted there? When he cometh as a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, to purify the sons of Levi, as gold and silver is purged, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; is not this the time of reformation?

Query 2. Who is the reformer? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ? Doth not he create anew? Doth not he blot out the old image, and form into a new lump? For if any man be in Christ, there is a renewing there; a new building there; yea, old things are passed away there; there is nothing in him but what is new. He is faithful (in all his house) inwardly to judge, condemn, crucify, subdue, destroy whatsoever is contrary to the nature and Spirit of his Father, and to form and build up the spirits of his in that which is new and pure.

Query 3. How, or by what, doth Christ reform? Is it not by his Spirit and power, by the light thereof, by the life thereof, by the virtue thereof? For nothing can change and reform the heart but that which is more powerful than him who corrupteth it.

Query 4. Where doth Christ reform and new-create? Is it not in the new covenant; in the faith and obedience thereof? Doth he not, by the laws thereof, break and disannul the laws of the old covenant, and make void the covenant of hell and death; and so make an everlasting covenant of life and peace; even an holy, pure, living agreement, between God his Father and the souls of his? Thus by his light he overcomes darkness; by his life he overcomes death; by his pure nature and Spirit he overcomes (chains down, subdues, and destroys) that which is impure, breaking the bond of sin and iniquity, and letting the oppressed go free from under it. Thus he manifests himself to be the Saviour by his holy anointing, breaking the yoke of the oppressor, *Isai. x. 27.*

Query 5. Whom doth Christ reform? Are they not those who take his yoke upon them, and learn of him? Are they not those who are turned to the light of his Spirit, inwardly made manifest; turned from the darkness, walking no more therein, but in his pure light? They that own his inward appearance in their hearts, and turn (from the enmity there) to him, receiving his light, his law, his life, his Spirit, them doth he exercise daily, and is daily reforming their hearts and ways thereby. But if any man receive h
not

not his light, his life, his Spirit, within, such an one is none of his; and he may reform himself as much as he can, but he knoweth not yet the day of the true reformation.

Query 6. How are they to walk whom Christ has begun to reform? Is it not in that light, in that Spirit, in that covenant, in that grace, wherein and whereby he hath in some measure reformed them? Is it not in the newness of the Spirit, and in the newness of the law thereof? Here Christ walked before the Father in all well-pleasing (*Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart*, said he, *Psal. xl. 7, 8.*) and here all his are also to walk, *1 John ii. 6.* For indeed there is no pleasing the Father, or Christ our Lord and master, out of the virtue, life, and newness of his own Spirit.

Query 7. What was the glory that was to follow the sufferings of Christ, spoken of, *1 Pet. i. 11*? Was it not the glory of his inward reformation in the hearts of the children of the new covenant? Doth not Christ give of his grace in the gospel? And doth not his grace make a glorious change? Doth not he give of his Spirit to his children? And doth not his Spirit change from sin, from shame, into holiness, into true beauty, into the heavenly glory, and so from glory to glory, translating more and more into the glory? Doth not Christ appear gloriously in the hearts of his, and in the assemblies of his, who meet together in his name, and wait upon him in that which is pure and living of him? And is there not a covering, or defence of the wing of the Almighty, upon the glory? *Isa. iv. 5.*

Query 8. Was not this glory brought forth in the days of the apostles? Was not great grace then upon them all? I mean such as received and held the truth in the love of it). Did they not witness the peace which passeth man's understanding? Had they not received the holy and spiritual understanding from him that is true; and were they not in him that is true? Did they not know victory and dominion over sin and death? Did not the little babes witness pardon of sin, and know him who preserveth from sin? Had not the young men overcome the wicked-one; and were not the elders strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? Were they not come to the spiritual Sion, and heavenly Jerusalem; and did they not walk in the light of the lamb, and of the holy city, before God the judge of all? There is no man, in these our days, can so much as conceive the glory of that state, but he that hath tasted of a measure thereof.

Query 9. Was not this glory eclipsed, and did not a great darkness come over it, hiding it from the sons of men, so that (for ages and generations) they knew not the true Spirit, the true light, the true life, the everlasting covenant, the holy gospel, the true church, the man-child, &c. but these, with many other heavenly mysteries, have been hid from their eyes.

Query 10. What hath got up since these have been hid? Have not the shadows of the night took place, and overspread the Christian state, instead of the light of the day? Hath not antichrist got up, and a false church appeared;

appeared; that which hath been tender, and begotten of God, snibbed, bowed down, curbed, and persecuted, and false devotion and worship set up instead of the true?

Query 11. Must not antichrist be destroyed, the false church judged, the true church come out of the wilderness into which she fled, the man-child appear again, conquering and to conquer all which hath risen up from the spirit of darkness since the first breaking forth of the gospel? And is not the gospel to be preached again to them that dwell on earth; even to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people? *Rev. xiv. 6.*

Now who is wise to understand the appearance of the Lord, and the beginning of these things, which is in a way contrary to man's wisdom; and so he that will discern them, must come out from following of the man's own spirit, nature, and wisdom in himself, into the sense and leadings of him who giveth the true eye-sight. The appearance of the Lord is inward and spiritual, and he must have an inward and spiritual eye who discerneth it. It was said of old, by mockers and scoffers, Where is the promise of his coming? For all things continue as they were from the beginning. The same spirit will say so still; and yet, to that eye which the Lord hath opened, he is already come inwardly, spiritually, in his own pure eternal life and power; and the precious effects of his coming are made manifest in many hearts; blessed be his name. Yea, he is further to appear in glory and pure brightness; and so we wait further for his appearance, both in our own hearts, and in the hearts of the children of men. We have met with our beloved; our God, whom we waited for, hath appeared. The Sun of righteousness hath arisen, with healing under his wings, and we have felt virtue and healing from him, and cannot but rejoice and testify of his salvation.

And what further manifestations of himself he hath yet to give forth, we are sure to partake of, being formed by him in Spirit, and found in that wherein he appears, and from whence his glory shines. Oh! that all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in any measure of sincerity, did know the way of the gospel, which is in the Spirit, light, life, and power, which is eternal, even in the grace and truth which is in him! And his kingdom, which is spiritual, and not of this world, cannot be shaken by this world (nor his Mount Sion removed); but is able to shake all nations and kingdoms which kiss not the Son, but oppose him. Blessed are they who are turned to the light of his Spirit, and who therein kiss and obey him.

IX.

Some **QUERIES** concerning the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of the Father (it being one and the same Spirit) for those who take themselves to be Christians (and under the Gospel Dispensation) to consider and examine themselves by, that they may not be deceived, either concerning their present Estate here, or the eternal Estate of their Souls hereafter; seeing the Apostle so expressly saith, If any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii.

Query 1. **D**OST thou know the Holy Spirit of the Father? Thou mayest have read somewhat concerning it, and have apprehensions in thy mind about it; but dost thou truly know what it is by its inward appearances and operations in thine own heart?

Query 2. Hast thou received God's Holy Spirit into thy heart? Hast thou let in Christ's Spirit, when he hath knocked at the door of thy heart, and received him? For he that is a true child, most naturally breatheth and crieth for the Father's Spirit; and the Father also most naturally giveth his Spirit to them that truly and rightly ask it of him, *Luke xi. 13.* and thou must thankfully receive the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, when the Father gives him.

Query 3. Doth the Spirit of Christ dwell in thee? Hath the stronger man cast the strong man out of thee, and taken possession of thy heart, and doth he dwell therein? Then thou mayest truly say, that thou art built up by God an habitation for him in the Spirit. Then thou art washed and cleansed by him from thy filthiness; and lusts or vain thoughts do not lodge in thee. For the Holy Spirit of Christ will not dwell where such things lodge; but come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, in whom I will dwell and walk, *2 Cor. vi. 15, 16, 17.*

Query 4. Doth God's Spirit lead thee into all truth that thou needest know and walk in? Art thou a true Child, depending upon, and guided by, the Spirit of the Father? Canst thou not see thy way, but as he maketh it known to thee? Art thou a follower of the spotless Lamb, in the same Spirit wherein he walked? If it be thus with thee, then art thou a child of God indeed.

Query 5. Dost thou live in the Spirit? Dost thou feel the Spirit of God to be a fountain of life, from whence life springs up into thee daily? Dost thou witness that scripture fulfilled in thee, *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water?* Hast thou received the living water from Christ? And is that living water become a well of life in thee?

Query

Query 6. Dost thou walk in the Spirit, in the life thereof, in the newness thereof springing up in thy heart? Dost thou know the difference between walking in the oldness of the letter, and in the newness of the Spirit?

Query 7. Didst thou ever learn of the Father, to know Christ? And didst thou ever learn of Christ, to know the Father? And hath the Father indeed revealed the Son to thee, and the Son indeed revealed the Father to thee? Or art thou yet only in the dead and dry notions, or barren comprehensions about these things?

Query 8. Dost thou know how the letter killeth, and how the Spirit quickeneth and maketh alive? And art thou made alive by the Spirit, and born of the heavenly water and Spirit, and so become spiritual as the scripture testifieth? *That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.*

Query 9. Art thou come under the ministration of the Spirit? Dost thou know what the ministration of the Spirit is? Or dost thou only know what the letter saith concerning the ministration of the Spirit, but art altogether ignorant of the ministration itself?

Query 10. Dost thou know what the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus means? Hast thou ever received this law; the law of the new covenant; the holy law of life written in thy heart by the finger of God's Spirit? For the same Spirit that wrote the law of the letter in tables of stone, writeth the law of the Spirit in the fleshly tables of the heart.

Query 11. Dost thou not grieve the Holy Spirit, nor quench it, nor despise the prophesyings thereof in thine own heart? For Christ is a king, a priest, a prophet; and he ministers in his sanctuary, in his temple (which the holy renewed heart is), in and by his Spirit.

Query 12. Dost thou know what the anointing is? Art thou anointed therewith? And doth thy whole ability lie therein, inasmuch as that thou art daily sensible thou canst not do any thing of thyself, but still findest God working in thee, both to will and to do that which is right in his eyes, of his own good pleasure?

Query 13. Did thy religion begin in the Spirit? In the living ministration of the new covenant? Did thy knowledge begin so; to wit, in feeling God opening thy heart by his Spirit, and giving thee the understanding whereby thou mightest know him? Did thy faith begin in his power, and doth it stand in the same power to this day? Oh! that men were sensible what is the right religion, and of the inward appearance of God's holy arm and power, which alone can redeem, and save the soul out of the hands of its enemies?

Query 14. Doth thy worship stand in the Spirit, and inward life of truth in thy heart? Art thou such a worshipper as the Father hath sought out and made so? Or art thou a worshipper of thine own or other mens making? And dost thou keep within the limits of the living and spiritual worship, and not transgress the law thereof?

Oh! who would be mistaken and deceived about such weighty things as these, of so great necessity and concern? Who would miss of God's Spirit, and of the law and covenant of life in Christ Jesus, and be only in a dream concerning these things, without the true, demonstrative knowledge, possession, and enjoyment of them?

X.

Of the true Way (the Way of Holiness, the Way of Life), and of the true Teaching and Knowledge.

CHRIST is the way, the only way to the Father; there is not another. Now every one that will truly know Christ, and come to Christ, must learn of the Father. It is written in the prophets, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me*, said Christ. Here are two things necessary for every one that would come to Christ. One is hearing of the Father; the other is, learning what he teacheth. For though a man do hear the living voice of the Father, yet if he do not learn and keep the instruction of life received from him, he may be drawn aside before he come to the Son. But he whose ears are opened to hear the voice, and who feels the instruction of life from the Father, to go to him in whom he hath placed life; here the Spirit of the Father secretly draws in the inwards of a man's mind and spirit, from that which is really dead, to that which is truly living.

Now, when a man is come to the Son, in whom the Father hath placed the fullness of life, then he shall witness him the way to the Father, and he will teach him daily of the Father. And here is the state of true subjection to the Son experienced, whom the soul must hear (and of whom he is to learn) in all things; who discovers the inward darkness in man's mind, and breaks down that in him which is contrary to God, having a daily cross ready for that which is to be crucified in him, whereby he shall die daily to himself. And as he dies to himself, Christ will reveal himself more and more in him, and he shall feel the pure seed of life springing more and more up in him, and living in him, and he in it; in and through which he shall come more and more into union and fellowship with the Father of spirits, and the whole living body of his church and people.

But now, to learn of the Father to come to the Son, and to learn of the Son to know the Father, and to walk in the newness of spirit before him (and not in an old dead knowledge and fleshly understanding), these are great mysteries, which none can learn by a literal conception and comprehension of things, but as they are quickened, and their minds and understandings opened and kept open by the Lord. Therefore this is the great skill and true wisdom, to know the Shepherd and his voice; and his manner of appearing, and to what he appears; which is to his own sheep, to
the

the true birth. And his way and manner of appearing to that birth, is by visiting and reaching to it by his power opening it, thereby giving it to see, hear, and understand; but shutting up himself from the contrary nature, wisdom, and spirit in all men.

There is somewhat which maketh a fair shew in the fleshy part, as if it were of God; but God knoweth what and who are his. Now it is for the true children, that the milk of the word, and the bread of life is; and them the Lord is still gracious to, and heareth all the desires and breathings of their hearts; them he preserveth and visiteth in Egypt, and also bringeth out thence. Them he leadeth through the wilderness, dividing the Red-Sea before them; before them also he divideth Jordan (the river of judgment), causing them to pass through it also, that they may enter into the Holy Land. And their lot he defendeth in the Holy Land, in their subjection to the Spirit and law of life which rules there. But the contrary birth falleth short by the way, and cannot enter into, nor abide in, that which is pure and living of God.

Now in the lowly seed the whole mystery of life is learned, by those that come thither, and wait there, growing up into him who is the head; but no lesson of life, and of the truth as it is in Jesus, is learned out of it. Oh! how careful had men need be to know this seed in themselves, and to witness its daily springing up and growth in them.

XI.

Concerning Separation from the Spirit and Ways of the World.

THERE is a necessity of separation from the spirit, ways, and worships of the world, by those that will be the Lord's people. The Jews outward were to be a separated people from all other people (from their gods, from their worships) if they would enjoy the favour of the Lord, and the blessings of the good land. God had separated them from all other nations, and they were not to mingle with them; neither in their worship, nor marriages, &c. So the Jews inward, who are God's gathering of spiritual worshippers, out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, are to be a separated and holy people to the Lord. For when God cast off the Jews, he sought out worshippers in their stead, even for a spiritual nation and holy people of inward Jews, instead of that outward people, outward place of worship, and outward land, which he cast off. Now those whom God seeks to be the new, inward, and spiritual worshippers (instead of the literal and outward) must come out of all other ways and gatherings, upon the many mountains, to the mountain of the Lord's house, and to the place of his gathering: the command is express, *Come out from among them, and be ye separate; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive*

receive you, &c. 2 Cor. vi. It is true, I seek you for worshippers, and I call you to the gospel-feast of fat things, and I will receive you if ye come; but ye must first come out from among all the false ways and false worshippers, and depart from (and not so much as touch) that which is unclean (the unclean spirit, his unclean ways and worshippers) and then I will receive you, and own you as my sons and daughters, and be a Father to you; not else. Mark now; The Jews outward (in their day) must be separate from all the Heathen outward, if they would be judged and owned by God for true worshippers according to the law. The primitive Christians were to separate from both Heathen and Jews too (even their temple, priests, and ordinances, which were once of God) if they would be worshippers, true worshippers under the gospel, worshippers of God's seeking. And the Christians, after the antichristian corruption and darkness, must come out of Babylon; that is, out of all forms of religion, and buildings out of the life and power (for that is Babylon, the city of confusion, which is built, stands out of, and practiseth out of, the order and unity of the Spirit), if they will be found worshippers in the day of restoration; after the long darkness of the apostasy, they must not worship the beast (nor worship God, as the beast teacheth and requireth; for in so worshipping, God is not worshipped, but the beast) nor bear his name, nor receive his mark, either on their forehead or right hand, nor be of the number of his name. Now the command is as express to come out of Babylon; that is, to separate from all antichristian ways and worships; as ever it was to separate from the Heathen and Jews; and there is no being a true worshipper in God's sight, but in the true way of separation from all false worshippers, who worship in forms and appearances of godliness, out of the life and power.

Now, oh! how precious it is to feel God's seeking, God's gathering, God's separating, God's teaching, leading, drawing into the truth, and true way of worship! For there are self-separations, which are out of the true Spirit, life and power. Yea, God may begin the separation, and another wisdom may step in, and carry it on, out of the limits of the sweet, innocent Spirit, life and power. Oh! blessed is he who is separated by the Lord from all that is not of him! But he that is but sensual, and hath not the Spirit, but only by a literal knowledge separateth himself, he differeth from others but in the outward form and appearance of godliness; but is one in nature and ground with those whom he separateth from. Thus the Papists, and all pretended Christians (of the same spirit) who feel not the true Spirit, power, and life, are but one in the ground, how great soever their difference outwardly seem. And those that separate further and further (even to the utmost extent outwardly, or in way of appearance) being not separated by the Lord from that nature and spirit wherein the enmity lodgeth, they are still inhabitants of one and the same city (for the city of Babylon

Babylon is very large) and daughters of one and the same mother, even of the wisdom which is from beneath; which wisdom, in its highest exaltation, is far beneath the nature and true excellency of the pure and heavenly wisdom, even in its lowest and most contemptible appearance. Oh! blessed is the religion, the worship, the separation, the fear of the Most High God, the faith, the knowledge, which begins in the Spirit and power (even in the evidence and demonstration of God's own Spirit), and which stands and abides therein! For herein are the children of light distinguished, and kept distinct (by God Almighty, who hath made the difference) from all the children of darkness.

1671,
About the 12th month.

By ISAAC PENINGTON,

Prisoner for the testimony of truth at
Reading-gaol.

7 AP 59

A
T R E A T I S E
CONCERNING
GOD'S TEACHINGS,
AND
C H R I S T's L A W.

With some other THINGS of
WEIGHTY IMPORTANCE

Particularly mentioned after the P R E F A C E.

Written by

I S A A C P E N I N G T O N.

Prisoner at READING-GAOL for the Testimony of Truth.

They also that erred in spirit shall know understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. ISA. xxix. 24. Blessed be the LORD, it is so. This Prophecy is sensibly and experimentally fulfilled, and fulfilling daily more and more.

[div]

T H E
P R E A C E.



CHRIST, who came from the Father, and knew the way of truth and life everlasting, and was to guide men to the Father; being the only way unto him, preached the kingdom, and bid men seek the kingdom; teaching and instructing them in many parables concerning it, and directing them where and how to find it.

The apostles likewise (who succeeded Christ in the same Spirit and power wherein he ministered) preached the same kingdom, declaring and describing what it was, and wherein it consisted; namely, not in word, but in power (even in the power which shakes all that is to be shaken, but cannot be shaken itself, nor the kingdom which is in it, *1 Cor. iii. 20.* and *Heb. xii. 28.*) Nor was the kingdom of God meat and drink (or any outward thing); but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, *Rom. xiv. 17.*

And they preached not in vain; for the life was inwardly revealed in many, the power inwardly revealed, and the righteousness, peace, and joy thereof felt. For such as truly believed and obeyed the gospel, received the kingdom which could never be shaken, and had an entrance ministered to them thereinto, according to their diligence and carefulness in the truth.

Now afterwards a great darkness came over, and this glorious kingdom was again veiled, and the kingdom of darkness and deceit overspread the professors of Christianity; and in this time notions and outward knowledges took with men, instead of the life and truth itself, wherein the kingdom and power stands.

But, blessed be the Lord, the light of life again shines out of and over the darkness, and the kingdom is again received, and the entrance into it again known; and from what is seen and heard (and in measure enjoyed and possessed) is a faithful testimony given forth. And blessed are they who hear the joyful sound; for it is no less than the sound of life itself, the power itself, the gospel itself, the Spirit himself, manifesting himself in, and speaking through, vessels according to his pleasure.

Now

P R E F A C E.

dv

Now they that receive this light, which is testified of, and witnessed to, receive Christ; but they that despise and reject it, reject him; as will be made manifest in the day of the Lord, whatever men, in their wisdom and comprehensions, judge to the contrary, who know not, nor are able to judge of the appearances of the Lord, or of the glory of this dispensation.

For this dispensation is indeed most precious, glorious, and living, being a dispensation of the seed and power of life itself, whereby God translateth out of darkness, and the regions thereof, into the kingdom of his dear Son, and into his glorious image. Which, reader, not that thou mayest have only notions concerning, but mayest really come to partake of, is the end of my giving forth these things following; which sweetly, freshly, livingly, and powerfully sprang up in my heart for thy sake, and are in great love presented to thy view,

By a sufferer for the truth which lives in him,
and in which he lives, through the tender
mercy of the Lord, and to the glory of
the riches of his grace,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

A

T R E A T I S E

CONCERNING

GOD's Teachings, and CHRIST's Law, &c.

I.

Concerning God's Teachings.

It is written in the prophets (said Christ) they shall be all taught of God. Every one therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me, John vi. 45. For the prophets indeed had said, All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

NOW whose children are they which shall all be taught of the Lord? And which are they which shall all know the Lord by the teachings of his Spirit, from the least to the greatest? Are they not the children of the free woman, the children of the Jerusalem which is from above, which is the mother of all that are truly living? Now all her children the Father of life begets, and taketh care to teach them the true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge; so that they indeed know the Lord, being taught by the anointing so to do; and they indeed know Christ, the Father revealing him to them: for none knows the Father but the Son, and none knows the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father reveals him. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven* (said Christ to Peter, *Matt. xvi. 17.*) And it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, said Paul, *Gal. i. 15, 16.* And how did Paul preach Christ among the Gentiles? Did he not preach him as a mystery hid from ages and generations, which none but the Father could reveal and make manifest? And when he

e is known and made manifest, is he not known within, revealed within, made manifest within? *Col. i. 26, 27.* and *1 John i. 2.* Mark: *The life was manifested.* Thus they came to know Christ; and if they would bring others to the knowledge of Christ, they must bring others to the manifestation of the same life, and shew unto them that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto them, *ver. 2.* Now that they might do thus, they were to preach the light to them (even this message, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, *ver. 5.*) and to turn them to the light (*Acts xxvi. 18.*) in which alone men can see and receive the life which is eternal. Men may know or comprehend many things concerning the Messiah from the letter; but they can only know the Messiah himself in the light which shines into their hearts, and which he sent his apostles to direct and turn their minds to. For they directed them to the Word within, light within, life within, Spirit within; to feel after the manifestation of God within, which was communicated to the very Gentiles, *Rom. i. 17.* And so Paul directed the Gentiles to seek after and find God nigh, and not afar off, *Acts xvii. 27.* Oh! this is precious to find and feel God near, Christ near; in his light to see light; in his life to feel and enjoy life! For here (in the place of darkness, in the place of sin and death, in the place where dragons lay, *Isa. xxxv. 7.*) is the redeeming power to be felt, and the deliverance of the soul experienced by those that truly believe.

The Scribes and Pharisees had a knowledge that the Messiah was to come; but how came they by it? Why they had read so in the letter of the scriptures. The professors of this age have a knowledge that Christ is come; how came they by that? Why they have read so in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. But who hath believed the report of life now, and to whom is the arm of the Lord (which is now stretched forth) revealed? Who hath heard and learned of the Father to know the Son, and so to come to him, even from the inward revelation of his Spirit, and from the inward living knowledge which is thereby? *Every one therefore* (saith Christ) every one of these children, every one that is taught of God (because of what they have heard and learned of the Father) cometh to the Son. Now every one that is thus drawn, and thus cometh, Christ receiveth, and giveth to all such eternal life; and they know him who giveth them eternal life, and who preserveth and maintaineth life in them. Others have but a notional knowledge of him; but do not indeed know him that is true, nor are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ, who is the very God and life eternal, *1 John v. 20.*

And so they that are taught of God, learn of him to repent from dead works, and do repent them thereof; whereas others, through hardness of heart, do not so much as discern which are dead works, which not, in matters of worship. Others do not know the true difference between that which is dead and that which is living; but death (unknown to them) lives and reigns in their very knowledge and apprehensions of things; even in

their faith, in their duties, yea, in all they believe and perform to God. For as Paul was alive without the law once, even when he walked according to the letter of the law blameless; so all sorts are now dead, in the midst of all their knowledges and practices from the letter (how much alive soever they may seem to themselves therein) till they come to the ministration of the Spirit. For the letter killeth; but the Spirit quickeneth, or giveth life, 2 Cor. iii. 6. and *ver.* 3. This therefore is the work of a true minister, to beget into the Spirit, and into the life; but ah! how little do men know what dead works are, and what it is truly to witness repentance from them! Men out of God's Spirit, light, and power, are so far from repenting for them, that they do not so much as rightly distinguish and discern them; but take that for living which is dead; kindling a fire of themselves, and compassing themselves about with sparks, thinking the warmth thereof to be the true warmth. Now if men are not come to the true repentance from dead works, much less are they come to the true faith towards God; and so are yet in their sins, yet out of Christ, having never learned of the Father to come to him; and so are still in Egypt's spirit, in Egypt's wisdom, and in that hold their religion: and whenever God appears in his Spirit and power, he will not be that to them which they expect; but a dreadful stroke from him will come upon all their ways and worships, which are as abominable to God as they are pleasing to them. But alas! to what end are words to that ear, to that spirit, which is like the deaf adder, which will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely! Could the letter-learned Scribes and Pharisees hear the voice of Christ in the days of his flesh? Nay; they could not, in that gain-saying spirit. Can the letter-learned professors, in the same spirit, hear the voice of Christ's Spirit now? Nay; they cannot. And they that cannot hear the voice of the second Adam, the voice of the quickening Spirit, the voice of him who gives life to the soul, how can they live? And if they first receive not life from Christ, how can they perform any living action to God? How can they worship in the Spirit and in the living truth, who are not gathered into the Spirit and into the living truth? Oh! that men could consider aright of these things, and wait on the Lord for the true understanding of them! For without the true knowledge of God and Christ (without that knowledge which is life eternal) men must needs perish. It cannot be otherwise; for the true knowledge only saves, and therefore they which have it not must needs perish.

II.

Concerning the Law of Christ.

And the isles shall wait for his law, Isa. xlii. 4.

WHAT is that law which the isles were and are to wait for? Is it not the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ, even the grace in the inward parts, the truth in the inward parts? The law outward was given by Moses to the outward Jews; but grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ. That is the law of the Jew inward, which the isles of the Gentiles were to wait for.

The apostle holdeth forth Christ to be the soul's master (he is the Shepherd, Lord, King, and Bishop of the soul), to whom every one must give an account. Now what must men give an account to him of? Is it not of the grace and truth which comes by him? If any man hath received that, obeyed that, believing the sound, report, and voice of that, and so loved and followed it, will it not be said unto him, *Well done, good and faithful servant*? But if any one hath neglected and despised the grace (not improving the talent, but improving his own natural abilities, while God's talent lay wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth) will not that person be judged a slothful servant as to improving the talent, whatever he hath been as to improving his own natural parts and abilities?

Now mind: If Christ be an inward, a spiritual master, what is his law but the inward teachings of his Spirit? A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things; and he that will not hear him, how secure and confident soever he may seem to himself of his state at present; yet it shall come to pass that he shall be cut off and destroyed from among God's people. Are not the words, the voice, the motions, the leadings, the drawings, the commands of his Spirit, the law to all that are spiritual? Doth he not say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; to another, Do this, and he doth it? Here is the glory of the great Lord and King, and of the great High-priest, over the household of God, in that he giveth forth precepts according to his holy will and pleasure; and all his sheep know his voice, and follow him; and all his children and servants observe and obey him.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit, said the holy apostle. Here are the limits of the children of the new covenant; here is the law of life (the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus), the law of the new covenant, written in the heart, which none can read but with the new eye. The children of the flesh may read the letter, and comprehend concerning the letter, and gather rules and observations out of the letter; but the children of the new covenant alone can read the law of life in the heart. And
this

this law is the path of life, the path of all that are renewed by God's Spirit, which the Jew inward is to read diligently, and to have his delight therein, and to meditate thereon day and night. And this law is light, true light, pure light, spiritual light, yea, the light which is eternal, and never varies; and the commandment which comes therefrom is a lamp, which they that receive know it to be no less than life everlasting; for indeed the commandments of Christ's Spirit are felt to be so. Now, this commandment, this law, this light, shines in the darkness at first; but afterwards out of the darkness more and more (as it is believed, received, obeyed, and walked in) unto the perfect day; see *Prov. iv. 18, 19.*

Quest. But how may I wait for, come to know, and receive this law? I am not of the stock of the Jews natural, but of the isles of the Gentiles; how may I meet with and receive the law of life from Christ, or the grace and truth which comes by him?

Ans. The way of receiving it, is to mind that which enlightens and renews the mind, drawing it out of the nature and spirit of this world, and out of the ways, worships, knowledge, and customs thereof, into that which seasons it otherwise, and opens it another way. Now here the grace is met with, here the truth is met with, here the Spirit of life is met with; here the inward change is felt, and the new law written in the heart and spirit. And here the mind comes to prove and know what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God: for God is the teacher in the new covenant, and his teachings are here, even in that which he renews. He gathereth into his Spirit, and he teacheth those that abide in his Spirit, and giveth unto them eternal life, eternal virtue, eternal nourishment, in and from his Spirit. But they that may be great searchers into the letter, and comprehenders from the letter, and practisers according to their apprehensions of the letter (not being gathered into nor reading in the Spirit) they miss of eternal life, and of the redeeming arm and power, and are not saved from sin by the blood of Christ; but are yet in transgression, darkness, and death, even until now. The Lord, who knoweth all things, make manifest their estates and conditions unto them, that they perish not for ever; but may learn of the Father to know the Son, and of the Son to know the Father, and come to witness true life manifested in their own hearts, that they may have fellowship with the Father and Son therein. For he that is not turned from darkness unto light (from the darkness within in his own heart, unto the light which God causeth to shine there) doth not yet know Christ livingly and savingly; but is only in the notions and comprehensions concerning him, which cannot save. For it is the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, inwardly revealed against the power of sin and death, which is alone able to save therefrom.

Now consider with yourselves (all who would not be deceived in this matter) have ye known this law? Have ye received it in measure, and do ye wait to know and receive it daily more and more? Then are ye Christians indeed,

indeed, and of the house of Jacob, which walk in the light of the Lord, and in the light of the holy city, whose light the Lamb is. But without this law, without this light, without the inward writing of God's Spirit in your hearts, ye cannot be inward Jews, nor children of the new covenant.

These are weighty things, and to be considered weightily, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. Oh! wait to know what it is to go into the sanctuary, and to weigh things there in the balance thereof, which exactly and infallibly weigheth and determineth whatever is brought thither! For of a truth ye cannot understand any scripture aright which treateth of any spiritual and heavenly mystery, but as ye are taught of God, to bring it unto the balance of the sanctuary, and to weigh it there; where all your own apprehensions, meanings, and conceptions will fall, and the mind and intent of God's Spirit be alone owned and justified. Ah! what a vast difference there is between weighing mens apprehensions and conceivings upon scriptures in the balance of their own understandings, and weighing them in the true balance! In the former are all the erring judgments; but in the latter is the true, unerring judgment of God's own Spirit, in the light which is eternal; which judgment will stand for ever.

III.

A brief Relation concerning myself, in reference to what has befallen me in my Pursuit after Truth.

I Was acquainted with a spring of life from my childhood, which enlightened me in my tender years, and pointed my heart towards the Lord, begetting true sense in me, and faith, and hope, and love, and humility, and meekness, &c. so that indeed I was a wonder to some that knew me, because of the favour and life of religion which dwelt in my heart, and appeared in my conversation.

But I never durst trust the spring of my life, and the springings up of life therefrom; but, in reading the scriptures, gathered what knowledge I could therefrom, and set this over the spring and springings of life in me, and indeed judged that I ought so to do.

Notwithstanding which, the Lord was very tender and merciful to me, helping me to pray, and helping me to understand the scriptures, and opening and warming my heart every day.

And truly my soul was very near the Lord, and my heart was made and preserved very low and humble before him, and very sensible of his rich love and mercy to me in the Lord Jesus Christ; as I did daily from my heart cry grace, grace, unto him, in every thing my soul received and partook of from him.

Indeed I did not look to have been so broken, shattered, and distressed, as I afterwards was, and could by no means understand the meaning there-
of

of, my heart truly and earnestly desiring after the Lord, and not having the sense of any guilt upon me. Divers came to see me, some to enquire into, and consider of, my condition; others to bewail it, and (if possible) administer some relief, help, and comfort to me; and divers were the judgments they had concerning me. Some would say it was deep melancholy; others would narrowly search, and enquire how, and in what manner, and in what way I had walked; and were jealous that I had sinned against the Lord, and provoked him some way or other, and that some iniquity lay as a load upon me: but, after thorough converse with me, they would still express that they were of another mind; and that the hand of the Lord was in it, and it was an eminent case, and would end in good to my soul.

At that time, when I was broken and dashed to pieces in my religion, I was in a congregational way; but soon after parted with them, yet in great love, relating to them how the hand of the Lord was upon me, and how I was smitten in the inward part of my religion, and could not now hold up an outward form of that which I inwardly wanted, having lost my God, my Christ, my faith, my knowledge, my life, my all. And so we parted very lovingly, I wishing them well, even the presence of that God whom I wanted; promising to return to them again, if ever I met with that which my soul wanted, and had clearness in the Lord so to do.

After I was parted from them, I never joined to any way or people; but lay mourning day and night, pleading with the Lord why he had forsaken me, and why I should be made so miserable through my love to him, and sincere desires after him. For truly I can say, I had not been capable of so much misery as my soul lay in for many years, had not my love been so deep and true towards the Lord my God, and my desires so great after the sensible enjoyment of his Spirit, according to the promise and way of the gospel. Yet this I can also say, in uprightness of heart, It was not gifts I desired to appear and shine before men in; but grace and holiness, and the Spirit of the Lord dwelling in me, to act my heart by his grace, and to preserve me in holiness.

Now indeed the Lord at length had compassion on me, and visited me; though in a time and way wherein I expected him not: nor was I willing (as to the natural part) to have that the way which God shewed me to be the way; but the Lord opened my eye, and that which I know to be of him in me closed with it, and owned it; and the pure seed was raised by his power, and my heart taught to know and own the seed, and to bow and worship before the Lord in the pure power, which was then in my heart. So that of a truth I sensibly knew and felt my Saviour, and was taught by him to take up the cross, and to deny that understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, which had so long stood in my way; and then I learned that lesson (being really taught it of the Lord) what it is indeed to become a fool for Christ's sake. I cannot say but I had learned somewhat of it formerly; but I never knew how to keep to what I had learned till that day.

And

And then God shewed me (by degrees, as he nurtured me up in the heavenly sense and experience of his Spirit) the workings of the good in me, and the workings of the subtilty; and how himself had, in time past, taught me to pray, and to understand the scriptures, and to believe in his Son, and know some things aright; but withal, how a knowledge and understanding of another nature had crept in, and gained ground upon me (which indeed I knew not how to distinguish thoroughly from the other, and watch against), and so the truth came not to live in me, nor I to live in that, according to the utmost desire and travail of my soul.

But now of a truth, by this blessed visitation of the everlasting gospel, the Lord hath at length brought me back to the same spring I was acquainted with at first, and joined my heart in true sense and understanding to it; so that the life that I live is by the springing up of life in me; and I know the Lord my God, by being daily taught by him so to do; and I love him, by feeling my heart circumcised and constrained through the new nature thereunto. And truly it is natural to the good seed in me, and to my soul in and through the same, to trust my Father, and to suffer any thing that he requires of me, who freely giveth me both to do and to suffer: for indeed I live not of myself, but by a continual gift and quickening of life in my heart.

And oh! that others also could come to hear the testimony of truth and life from God's Holy Spirit, and be turned thereby to the pure principle and Spirit of life itself (which many formerly had a true taste of, but are now turned aside to another nature and spirit, though they themselves know it not), that they might witness the gospel-power, and know the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem, and suck at her breasts, and be dandled on her knee, who is the mother and bringer-up of all that are truly living.

IV.

A Question about preaching the everlasting Gospel answered.

Quest. **H**OW is the everlasting gospel (wherein Christ is truly made known, and salvation really witnessed in the hearts of those that receive it) preached at this day? How hath the Lord appointed it to be preached, and how is it preached, and how may men come to hear it, that their souls may live? Are not they blessed that hear the joyful sound thereof? Are not they wretched and miserable, and blind and naked, who mistake and miss concerning that sound of it, which it pleaseth the Spirit of the Lord to give forth in this day?

It is wonderful to consider how the truth, the gospel, the life, the power which saves, is one and the same in all ages and generations, and yet still hid from the wise, prudent, professing eye, in every age and generation.

Now let me speak a few words to this thing; not only from what I have felt in my heart, but have also read in the scriptures of truth.

Answ. The gospel, after the apostasy, is thus to be preached: *Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, &c.* Rev. xiv. 6, 7. He that knoweth the preacher that preacheth this; he that hath heard this preached in his own heart; he that hath met with that fear which God's Spirit teacheth and giveth; he that hath known the hour of God's judgment, and had the axe laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and hath been taught by the Son to worship the Father in Spirit and Truth; he hath without doubt met with the gospel, the everlasting gospel: and if God require of such an one, and assist him by his Spirit and power to preach this to others, he is a preacher of the everlasting gospel, and an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. But all should take heed of preaching their own formings and conceivings upon the letter (as too many do in this day, who reprobate, revile, and persecute the life and power), for that falls short of true preaching the letter.

Oh! that these things were weighty upon mens spirits, that they might learn aright to search and understand the scriptures, and know how the Father hath revealed the Son in this day, and how to come to him, to receive life from him! For many (who seem knowing) through ignorance, mistake in this matter, and so run on in their own wills, wisdoms, and comprehension of things, and miss of the drawings of the Father, and so come not aright to the Son; but only according to what they themselves imagine and apprehend from what they have gathered and conceived upon the scriptures.

God, who commanded light to shine in this outward world, hath judged it necessary to cause the light of his Spirit to shine inwardly in mens hearts; and this gives the knowledge of the scriptures, and the true sense and discerning of inward and spiritual things; yea, here the Son is known, and his blood felt cleansing; which the scriptures without do not make manifest; but this the scriptures are a clear and faithful record of, and testimony to. Men had need take heed how they read, and how they understand, the scriptures (in what light, in what spirit), for it is easy erring; but without the presence and guidance of God herein, men cannot walk safely. And truly it is great presumption in any man to read the scriptures boldly, without fear and reverence to him who is the author of them; or to put any of his meanings and conceivings upon God's words; which it is hard for him to forbear doing, who readeth them in the liberty of his own spirit, out of the light of God's Spirit, which is the limit and yoke of the true readers and understanders of the scriptures.

V.

Concerning Christ's Ministry, or Priesthood.

CHRIST is made by God a minister, or high-priest, over the spiritual Israel of God. *Not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life* (as Heb. vii. 16. and chap. viii. 2.); and he ministers with his Spirit and power unto and in all his. So that he that knows Christ's ministry, knows the power, the life, the Spirit in which he ministers; but he that is not acquainted with these, is yet to learn to know Christ aright, and to believe in him unto life and salvation, which are wrapped up, comprehended, revealed, and communicated in the power wherewith he ministers. For the very beginning of Christ's ministry is in the Spirit and power of God, whereby he redeems out of the Spirit and power of Satan; and to this men are to be turned, if they will witness salvation by Jesus Christ, even to the light and power of God's Holy Spirit, which breaks the darkness and strength of the kingdom of Satan in the heart. For indeed all literal professions, beliefs, knowledges, and practices, out of the life and power, Satan can transform himself into, and uphold and maintain his kingdom under, in the hearts of men; but the inward light and power of life breaks it, where the minds of people are by the Spirit of the Lord turned thereto, and subjected under its rule and government.

VI.

Concerning the true Knowledge of Christ.

IT was said, in the time of the prophets, under the ministration of the law, that *the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they* (that is, the outward Israel, Israel after the flesh) *should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts*, Mal. i. 7. And doth not Christ, our High-priest; and the Apostle of our profession, keep all the people's knowledge? And are they not all to seek the law of life, the law of the new covenant, at his mouth? Is not he the messenger of the covenant, who brings tidings of the covenant of life and peace; and must not the soul that will live hear him? Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. Is not he the sealed and Sent-One of the Father, to open the blind eye, and to bring the prisoner out of the pit? Is not he the Shepherd of the spiritual flock? And are not such as are called out of the world (and sanctified by him) his sheep? And are not all his sheep to hear his voice, and follow him? Is not he the prophet, like Moses, appointed by God, for all the spiritual Israel to hear in all things? (Is not his Spirit to teach and lead into all truth? Can any else lead into truth; or can any come into truth unless they be led?) And they that will not hear the voice

of his Spirit in these latter days (seeing God, in these last days, speaketh by his Son, and saith to all the true disciples and followers of the Lamb, *Hear ye him*); are they not to be cut off from the comforts of his Spirit, from the pure refreshments of his Spirit, from the life of his Spirit, and from the living Israel, and so to be numbered among the dead and unredeemed?

Christ saith, *I am the way, the truth, and the life*. It is he alone that is the living way, which leads to the Father. Now how is Christ the way to the Father? How is he the truth? How is he the life? Is he so by any literal and outward knowledge of him; or by the inward, spiritual, and living knowledge of him? They that know his Spirit, know the way; and they that walk in his Spirit, walk in the way. This is most certain: they that walk not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness and life of the Spirit, they walk in the new and living way. How is the letter old; and how is the Spirit new? How is Christ known after the flesh, and so to be known no more? And how is he known after the Spirit, and so to be known for ever? Man is but flesh, and his knowledge and understanding of things, of his own fetching from the literal relation and descriptions of them, is but the knowledge of the fleshly part; but there is a new eye, a new understanding, a new heart and mind, to which the Father reveals him; and that knowledge which the new-birth receives of the Father, that is spiritual, true, pure, heavenly, living knowledge. And so the children of the kingdom are to dwell in that light wherein the Father reveals the things of the kingdom; and this differenceth them from all the literal knowers of the things of God upon the face of the earth. Now this is it which satisfieth my heart concerning my knowledge of the things of God, even that I have so learned to know Christ, and to believe in him (and to repent from dead works, and to obey him, and suffer for him) as I could never have learned, unless the Father himself had taught me. And now seeing and partaking of the difference, I cannot but testify against all dead teachings, unto the Spirit's teaching, which is living; knowing assuredly, that no other teaching or learning the things of God will amount to true knowledge, or be owned in the day of the Lord, but that which is of and in the Spirit.

VII.

A few Words more concerning the Right Way of Knowing, as it is witnessed unto in the Scriptures, and experienced in the Hearts of those that truly and livingly know the Lord.

WISDOM is justified of her children, said Christ, Matt. xi. 19. Now, who is wisdom? What is wisdom? Is it not the heavenly mother of all the living? It is the Spirit which begets all, who are truly begotten to the Lord? Now where, and into what, doth he beget them? In the earthly nature, in the earthly wisdom, in the earthly spirit, or out of it; in and into that which is heavenly.

Now all that are of this heavenly begetting and birth, they know (own and justify) that wisdom, wherein they are begotten. They justify the nature of truth, the light of truth, the life of truth, the power of truth, the appearance of truth in their age and generation. The false birth will own and justify the words of truth which were formerly spoken, and the former appearances thereof (as the Scribes and Pharisees did Moses and the prophets, who denied Christ, who was truth, and spake truth beyond them); but the true birth knoweth and justifieth the present words, and the present appearances of truth, which the false birth still slighteth and despiseth.

If any man therefore will judge aright concerning the things of God, he must be sure to be of the true birth (a child of the true wisdom) and that he keep to that nature, Spirit, and birth, to which God giveth the discerning. For there is an eye of discerning, and a way of discerning, which is a gift; and he that will know aright, and judge aright, must keep to the gift of light, the gift of grace, the gift of the Spirit, the gift of the holy anointing; and be watchful and careful to judge in it, and take heed of judging out of it. For though a man be come to a spiritual state, and hath received the gift of grace, knowledge, and discerning; yet if he be not watchful to keep to the gift, he may easily err, and judge amiss.

VIII.

Concerning Christ's Righteousness, which is the Righteousness of all his Saints.

CHRIST is the head, his saints the body; and do they not all partake of one nature, one Spirit, one virtue, one life, one righteousness? Doth not Christ give them of his own righteousness, even of the righteousness which his Father gave him? And is not that righteousness which Christ giveth them, their righteousness? What was Christ's righteousness? Was it not the righteousness of God revealed in him, communicated to him, and made his? And what is their righteousness? Is not the same righteousness

ousness revealed in them, communicated to them, and made theirs, in and by Christ? Are not they made partakers of the divine nature, in and thro' him, and made the righteousness of God in him? Christ trusted his Father, and obeyed his Father in all things. Now was not that an effect of the righteous nature and Spirit of his Father in him? *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* And, Oh! how was his Father pleased therewith! Did not he say to him, as to Abraham in the like case? *Because thou hast done this thing, in blessing I will bless thee; and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed; and thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul, and be satisfied: for thou shalt not only gather the dispersed of Israel, but inherit the Gentiles also; and have the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*

Consider now seriously, in God's fear; Is Christ's obedience to the law of Moses the saints evangelical righteousness? Or is his righteousness revealed in them, from faith to faith? Was his being circumcised outwardly, their circumcision? Or is his inward circumcising them, their circumcision? Which of these is the gospel circumcision; the circumcising of his flesh outwardly, or the circumcising of their hearts inwardly? Again, was his being outwardly baptized, their baptism? Or is the inward baptism of the Spirit, the gospel-baptism? Doth he not fulfill the righteousness of the law of the Spirit of life in them, who believe in his Spirit and power, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit? Was not Christ justified in the Spirit? And are not all his justified in the Spirit also? Whatsoever is of God, whatsoever is wrought in God, doth not God justify? Is not the person here justified, the faith justified, the works justified with the justification of life, and of God's Holy Spirit, from whence they proceed? And here Christ's words are verified, *He that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God,* John iii. 21. And are not his deeds then justified? He that is united to the Spirit of God (and acquainted with the Spirit of God, and knows his voice) hears, and sees, and feels, and understands what God condemns, and also what he justifies; who never condemns any thing that ariseth from himself, and is wrought in himself; but only that which cometh from the flesh, and is wrought in the flesh. And here he sees (in the true light) what faith is imputed for righteousness, and what faith is shut out; and what works are accounted righteous, and what works are shut out: and how Enoch walked with God in the righteous Spirit and life, and was therein justified; and how Noah built an ark in the faith, being moved with fear, and was therein with his family saved. So Abel sacrificed in the faith, *By which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts,* Heb. xi. 4. Mark; his sacrifice, his gift, came from a righteous Spirit, and so the righteous God testified of his gift; and such are all the sacrifices now, that are offered up in God's Spirit, and in the true faith. And so we also see how Abraham (the father of the faithful) was *justified by works,* James ii. 21. and how God was pleased with him, because he had done that thing of offering up his only son at God's command.

command. Also Phinehas's zeal for the Lord, in executing judgment, was highly esteemed of the Lord, and *was counted to him for righteousness, unto all generations for evermore*, Psa. cvi. 30, 31.

But alas! How do men mistake about the righteousness of Christ, about the gospel-righteousness; and, in effect, make it but the righteousness of the law, but the righteousness of the old covenant, performed in the person of another for us, and imputed to us? Whereas it is the righteousness of another covenant, even of the new and living covenant, which the Lord Jesus Christ worketh, both in us and for us. Now whoever receiveth this righteousness from him, and is clothed with it by him, he findeth it to be the righteousness of the gospel, the new and living righteousness, the true and everlasting righteousness, both of the Father and Son, which the souls of those that truly believe, partake of in them and with them.

Now consider a scripture or two, to evidence this further.

The apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. *The Lord is that Spirit (the Lord Jesus is the second Adam, the quickening Spirit) in whom the veil is done away*, ver. 15. And so the true Christian (in whom the *veil is done away*, who is come into the true liberty of the Spirit) *with open face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, is changed into the same image*.

Now mind: if man be changed into the heavenly image, if he partake of Christ's image, is he not made righteous, and become truly righteous therein? Was not the image of the first Adam holy and righteous? And is not the image of the second Adam holy and righteous also? And are not they that are changed from the image of sin and Satan, into Christ's image, holy and righteous in that image? Are they not changed from unrighteousness to righteousness? And is not this image, whereinto they are changed, and wherein they are new created by God, their righteousness? Whoever is ingrafted into Christ, is he not ingrafted into righteousness? Cut off from unrighteousness, and ingrafted into righteousness; even into the righteous nature and Spirit of the Lamb? And doth he not partake of the righteousness of the vine or olive-tree, into which he is ingrafted? And doth not that become his righteousness? If the root be holy, then are also the branches; and if the root be righteous, so are also the branches; and that is the righteousness and holiness of the branches, which they have from the root.

The other scripture is that of *Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24*. which speaks of putting off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and of being renewed in the spirit of the mind, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Mark; here is the new creation. Now consider well, what is the holiness and righteousness of the new creation? Is not that which is put off, old, corrupt, unholy, unrighteous? Is not that which is put on, new, holy, righteous; even the image before spoken of, Christ the heavenly image, the new man,

man, which is created and formed in man? And then God owneth such to be his people, *Isa. li. 16.*

No man can do that which is righteous, but he that first partakes of God's righteous nature and Spirit. The tree must first be good, before the fruit can be so. A man must first be renewed and made righteous, before he can bring forth righteousness. So that he that doth bring forth righteousness, without doubt he is inwardly renewed, without doubt he is inwardly righteous. Did the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law? Then, without doubt, they were partakers of another nature than the old corrupt nature, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. *Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous, 1 John. iii. 7.* This is the true and weighty judgment of God's Spirit; and he that judgeth otherwise is deceived, and erreth in this particular; and sheweth that he doth not yet know God's righteousness, and Christ's righteousness, which is one and the same. For, *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him, 1 John ii. 29.* Mark; the new birth precedes the doing of righteousness; and the doing of righteousness is a certain evidence of the new birth. He that doth righteousness is born of God; this fruit can arise from no other but the pure, living, heavenly root.

IX.

Of the Grace of the Gospel.

THE prophets of old prophesied of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, *1 Pet. i. 10, 11.* Now what was the glory which should follow? Was it not the setting up Christ's inward and invisible kingdom in the hearts of men? Was it not God's abundant pouring out his Spirit, and filling vessels therewith; so that the Spirit of grace and of glory should rest upon believers, as it had done upon Christ? Was it not God's tabernacling in men, and becoming their God, and making them his people? Was it not the fulfilling the precious promises concerning the gospel-state, whereby men should be made partakers of the divine nature (of the heavenly image), and be changed from glory to glory, by the renewing Spirit and power? Was it not to have fellowship with Christ, not only in his sufferings and death, but also in his resurrection and kingdom; where the bread and wine of the kingdom is eaten and drank, and the feast of fat things partaken of? Is it not a glorious state to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the dear Son? And to dwell with Christ in the kingdom; and sup there with him, and he with them? To have fellowship (pure fellowship, living fellowship) with the Father and the Son, that the blessedness and joy of the soul in the gospel-state may be full?

The

The law was a ministration of shadows; for under it were the various and many shadows of the good things to come, which were to be possessed and enjoyed in the days of the gospel. In the law there was an outward people (the Jews outward), an outward covenant, an outward land of blessings, plenty and rest; an outward Sion, outward Jerusalem, outward temple, outward ark, outward table, outward laver, outward candlesticks, outward lamps, outward oil, outward anointing, outward circumcision and sacrifices, outward new moons and sabbaths, outward kings, outward priests, and outward victories over outward enemies, &c.

But now, in the gospel, there is the substance of these things inwardly revealed, and inwardly possessed and enjoyed; even the Jew inward (the new man of the heart) an inward covenant of life and peace, an inward land of blessedness, of rest; an inward sabbath or day of gospel-rest (which the true believer keepeth in the faith, not bearing any burden, kindling any fire, nor doing any work of the flesh therein); an inward Sion, an inward Jerusalem or holy city; an inward temple (in which is the Holy of Holies), an inward ark, in which the law of life is treasured up; inward table, inward laver, inward candlestick, inward lamp, inward oil, inward anointing, inward circumcision and sacrifices, and solemn seasons; the inward King of Glory, inward prophet and priest known, even Christ within, who giveth victories and dominion over the inward enemies, and giveth his to partake of his kingdom and priesthood, *Rev. i. 6.* Yea, and (by his Spirit poured out upon them) maketh his seers and prophets also, as it is written, *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.*

Now, was not this fulfilled after the sufferings of Christ in the flesh? And is it not daily more and more fulfilled, as the sufferings of Christ, which are yet behind, are filled up in his body the church? Did not the glory then succeed? Was not the gospel-spirit and power then revealed and bestowed? And did it not bring into the gospel-state? Were not the precious promises fulfilled therein? *2 Peter i. 5, 6.* Are they not all yea and amen in Christ? Is not the veil or covering taken away in him? Is not the glory revealed in him? Is not the Lord one, and his name one in him? Is there not glory then in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will among men, as well as good-will in God towards men? Where is then the enmity and wars; the lusts and fightings? Where is the envy of Judah or Ephraim, or the vexing one another here? Are not these things drowned in the love and in the peace, in the life and in the power which is revealed in the gospel-state, and springs up in the gospel-spirit? They know not what spirit they are of, who would have fire come down from heaven upon the disobedient and gainfayers. To be sure, they are not of the gospel-spirit, not of Christ's Spirit, who came not to destroy mens lives, but to seek and save that which was lost, and to overcome by the overflowings of his love and tender visits

of his life. And how do his children make war in this day? Is it not with innocency, with meekness, with patience, with bowels of love, with long-suffering, with truth, with righteousness, like the followers of the Lamb, like the children of him who abounds therein? Indeed there is a sword given, there is a threshing instrument, there are darts and arrows to be shot into the hearts of the King's enemies, *Psa. xlv. 3, 4, 5.* But it is not to destroy the creature, but rather to smite and wound that spirit which captivates it, that the creature may witness deliverance and freedom therefrom: though it is true, that they who join with that spirit, must partake of its judgments and plagues, even to destruction, if they so continue.

Now this glory is wrapped up in the grace which is ministered by the gospel; and where grace is sown, the glory is sown (there is a true seed of the glory); and where grace abounds, the glory abounds. It was said concerning the first gathering of Christians by the apostles, that *great grace was upon them all*, *Acts iv. 33.* and indeed, it was a precious and glorious state, which they were gathered into and brought forth in. Now the grace is revealed again, the grace is poured forth again, the grace hath appeared, teaching and bringing salvation again; doth it not behove every one to know it and partake of it? Not to be content with words concerning the grace, but to know the grace itself, receiving it from the hand of him that giveth it, and hearing the voice, reproofs, and instructions of it? *Hear, and your souls shall live.* Whom should they hear? Are they not to hear Christ, the great prophet? How shall they hear Christ? Is there any other way, than by hearing his grace teaching them? Than by hearkening to the measure of the gift of grace, which is by Jesus Christ? *The law was given by Moses* (all his people, all his children, all his family were to come under the law, to be governed by the law). *Grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ* (all his children, all his people, all his family are to come under the grace, to be governed by the grace), who is faithful in all his house, dispensing of his grace and truth to all his, as Moses did of the law (committed to him) to all under him. So then, all that desire to be truly Christians, let them wait to know what the grace and truth which Christ giveth is, and to partake of it and come under it; under its teachings, under its influences, under its protection, under its government (by being subject to it; and in every thing guided by it) that they may know what that scripture means, in the true and weighty experience: *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace*, *Rom. vi. 14.*

X.

A Question answered concerning real Holiness.

Quest. **A**RE not persons to be really holy (really sanctified in Christ Jesus) who would be received by the Lord, and enjoy fellowship with him as sons and daughters, in the gospel of his Son?

Ans. Under the law, that people of the Jews were to be separated from the Heathen, to be outwardly circumcised and cleansed by the water and blood of purifying (which sanctified to the purifying of the flesh), and not to touch any dead or unclean thing; for any such thing polluted them, and those that were unclean must be kept without the camp, as unfit for the holy communion with God and his people, till cleansed.

Now what did this signify? Did it not signify that pure and clean state inwardly, which God requireth under the gospel? Did it not signify the inward circumcision of the heart and spirit before the Lord, and the cleansing of the soul, mind, and body, before its appearing to worship in the inward and spiritual temple? *Heb. x. 22.* Is there not a Jerusalem under the gospel, into which no uncircumcised or unclean thing is to enter, or appear before God there? Mark what the apostle saith, *Heb. xii. Ye are not come to the Mount that might be touched*, to outward Mount Sinai, or Sion, to the appearance of God there; but ye are come to the inward Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to fellowship with God and Christ there, *ver. 18.—22.*

Now what is the way to this holy fellowship and heavenly communion? Doth not God himself prescribe it? *2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be separated*, saith the Lord, *and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty. For God would have a people representatively holy in the time of the law (yet not destitute of inward holiness), and he will have a people really holy in the time of the gospel. *He that defileth the temple of God, him will God destroy*: but keep the temple pure, holy, and then the Holy God will dwell and appear there, according to his promise; *I will dwell in them, and walk in them.* And this is eternally true, and witnessed by certain experience among them that know the Lord; that if any thing that is unclean be touched, there is a defilement thereby, and there must be a cleansing felt, before an admittance into the presence of the Holy God, and enjoying fellowship with him again.

XI.

Concerning the Law of Sin in the Fleſhly Mind, and the Law of Life and Holineſs in the Renewed Mind; and whence each have their Strength.

WHAT is the law of ſin? Who writes it in the mind? And what is it when it is writ? *When luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin: and ſin when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death*, James i. 15. So that the firſt beginning of ſin is evil luſt; and the whole corruption that is in the world, is through luſt, 2 Peter i. 4. Now whence cometh that luſt? Is it not begotten in the mind and ſpirit by the tempter? And what is the law, both of the luſting, and of the ſins committed through the luſt? Is it not the luſtful nature, the luſtful will, the luſtful wiſdom, the luſtful deſires and paſſions, which the God of this world begetteth in the worldly part? So on the other hand, there is an holy law in the holy and renewed mind. Whence cometh that law? Doth it not come from God? Doth it not come from the Holy One? Is it not he that blots out Satan's law, and then writes his own law in the hearts of his? Now, what is his law? Is it not of a contrary nature to Satan's law? What God writeth in the hearts of his, teaching them holineſs, requiring holineſs, enlightening the mind unto holineſs; manifeſting the good, perfect, and acceptable will, is not that his law? Under the old covenant the law was at a diſtance, writ in tables of ſtone; but under the new covenant the law is nigh, written in the heart by the Spirit and power of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. For he is King, the inward King, the ſpiritual King of his people, who cometh to reform, and amend by his covenant, what was amiſs under the former. Now, becauſe he found under the old covenant, that laws outwardly written would never bring men into, and keep men in, ſubjection to his Father; therefore he writeth inwardly by his Spirit and power, and viſiteth with the inward eternal day, even the day of his power; and ſo maketh his people willing to receive the law of his Spirit of life, which maketh *free from the law of ſin and death*. For this law being inward and ſpiritual, and more powerful than the other, overcomes the other law, even the *law of ſin and death* (though it be inward and ſpiritual, and inwardly written alſo), and ſetteth free from it; Rom. vi. 18. and viii. 2.

Now theſe laws have each their ſtrength from him that writes them. The law of ſin and death hath its ſtrength from the god of this world, the prince of darkneſs, who ruleth in all that are diſobedient to the Spirit and power of Chriſt. The law of holineſs, the law of life, the law of faith in the power, the law of obedience to God's Holy Spirit, hath its ſtrength from the Holy One, from the prince of life and peace; for Satan is near his ſubjects, and dwells in them, to act them, and to make his laws of
fin

sin and disobedience forcible in them. Every motion and temptation to sin he kindles, and adds vigour to, that he may set on flame the wicked spirits of men after sin, vanity, pride, lust, uncleanness, cruelty, and all manner of wickedness, that they may draw on iniquity as with cart-ropes, and drink it in as the ox doth water (*James* iii. 6.) And the Lord also is near to the soul; the king of holiness, the king of righteousness and peace is near, to give strength to every holy desire in the heart, and to every motion of his Spirit towards that which is good and holy. Hence it is, that he that trusts God's Spirit, watching to, and following the movings and drawings thereof, finds life flow in, virtue and strength flow in, to carry on effectually in that which the Spirit of the Lord moves to. So that come but truly to know a motion, to understand the drawings and leadings of God's Spirit, strength is never wanting to him who giveth up in the faith to follow the Lord in that which he moves and draws to. And this is the great skill of Christianity, to come inwardly to know the Lord; to know the inward appearances of the Shepherd, his leadings out into the pastures, where eternal life is fed on; and again into the fold of rest, which is no less than the bosom of love, and life eternal. How the growth of the new man, the growth of the Christian state, is in the exercise under the law of life, under the law of the Spirit. For the Spirit exerciseth the mind by his law, and the mind is to give up to the exercise thereof, and to wait upon the Lord in it day and night; finding itself never without, but still under the law to Christ in every thing. And indeed how can a man do any thing aright without the sense and knowledge of the law? How can a man fight aright with his spiritual enemies without understanding the law of fighting? For there is a lawful fighting, and an unlawful fighting, against the soul's enemies. The unlawful fighting is in the self-will, wisdom, and strength, according to one's own apprehensions and conceivings, which gains no real ground; and therefore they that so fight cannot overcome. The lawful fighting is in the faith, in the wisdom and guidance of the Lord, in his Spirit and power, and this is ever successful. So there is a lawful running, and an unlawful running the race, which the apostle plainly implieth, when he saith, *So run that ye may obtain*, 1 Cor. ix. 24. So likewise there is a law of prayer, a law of faith, a law of love, a law of new obedience, a law of liberty (for the liberty under the gospel is not boundless, but bounded by the Spirit) a royal law, which the king of glory writes, and keeps living in the heart; by which his will is understood, and the way of life known, which never can be understood by any but those in whom this law is written, even the law of the new covenant, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Read and consider this seriously: for indeed it contains the very mystery of Christianity and redemption. For redemption is not by a notional knowledge of Christ (it is not so witnessed by any), but by receiving and submitting to the law of his Spirit. And mind and wait to know and understand whether this be not the law which David speaks of, when he saith,

Psal.

Psal. xix. 7, &c. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord truth, altogether righteous. Certainly the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is all this, containing in it the commandment which is life everlasting, and the sure testimony, and all the holy statutes, judgments, and fear, which the soul need to learn; and is indeed perfect, and able to convert and instruct perfectly the converted soul. And here the scripture is fulfilled under this holy law of the Spirit and power of life, *They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord* (they shall not do so in this covenant, under this ministration, which is a ministration not of the letter, but of the Spirit); *for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them*, by the teachings of my own Spirit, by my writing my law in their hearts, by my holy unction, which shall teach my children, my anointed-ones, all that they need to know, 1 *Job ii. 27. Jer. xxxi. and Heb. viii.*

Come, be not deceived about the new covenant; but wait to find the entrance thereinto, and to feel the virtue thereof, and to know and receive the law and power thereof, as becometh Christians.

XII.

Concerning God's gathering us home to himself, who are a People despised and rejected of Men, and in scorn by them called QUAKERS.

IT pleased the Lord, who is rich in mercy and goodness, to pity our wanderings and fore distresses, and at length to gather us home to the light and Spirit of his Son, which was the gospel-standard in the apostles days.

Now that by which God gathered us was the power of Christ, and the preaching of the everlasting gospel by the ministry which he hath raised up in these latter days. For as the Lord raised up a ministry to preach it at first, when he had some of the Jews and many of the Gentiles to gather; so he hath raised up a ministry to preach it again after the apostasy, that he may cause the sound thereof to go through all nations. And this ministry hath been raised to go forth in the same virtue, power, and Spirit wherein the foregoing ministry was sent.

God promised of old, that he would seek after, search out, and gather home, his scattered sheep himself, and become their Shepherd, *Ezek. xxxiv.* Now this was fulfilled in a great measure in the days of Christ and his apostles, when Christ came himself, and also sent his apostles after him, to seek and gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and not only so, but also to preach the gospel to all nations, that he might be God's salvation to the

the ends of the earth, gathering and saving lost and scattered souls out of every quarter and corner thereof.

But afterwards (after the spreading of the gospel, and Christ's gathering of many thereby) there was a great apostasy, and scattering from this holy standard of life and salvation, and darkness overspread the nations again, and an antichristian reign and kingdom got up, under a form and forms of godliness, without the life and power; in which forms people generally have been scattered from the life and power, which indeed is the gospel.

Now, in this cloudy and dark time, great hath been the loss and distress of the poor hungry sheep; their shepherds and watchmen not being able to preach the gospel distinctly to them, and direct their minds to the Spirit and power which saves: therefore God, in pity to this sad and lost condition of his sheep, sends his angel to preach his everlasting gospel to *them that dwell on the earth; to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people*, Rev. xiv. 6.

Now as the former publishing of the gospel began at the scattered Jews, who were God's people under the law; so this begins at the scattered Christians, who had some true desires, and had been seeking after the Lord (from mountain to hill, and hill to mountain), but could by no means find him; nor by any of the watchmen hear any certain news of their souls beloved. But the Lord, in his tender love and rich mercy, in the appointed time, sends forth the Shepherd of Israel to seek and find them out. And, blessed be the Lord, he sought them effectually, and hath found out many, and persuaded them to follow him; and hath brought their weary souls home to their proper resting-place, where they dwell under the care of the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

But if any shall yet further enquire, *How, and by whom, the gospel was preached unto us?* My answer is, *By the Shepherd himself.* God himself gave forth the sound, and great hath been the company of them that published it; and our ears and hearts were opened by the Lord to hear the sound, and know the Shepherd's voice.

And mind my words (which the Spirit of the Lord is now uttering forth through me; for they are words of truth, and certain understanding): they that do not hear and own the sound thereof now (from this ministry which the Lord hath now chosen, and sent forth), would not have heard nor owned the sound thereof in Christ's and his apostles days, had they lived therein; but have reproached and opposed them, had they lived then in those days, as they do now in these days. For of a truth it is the voice and sound of one and the same Spirit and wisdom; and they that do despise the one, would have despised the other, had they lived in the day of the appearance and manifestation thereof.

And then, for the manner of its preaching, it was just such as is described, ver. 7. of Rev. xiv. For we are commanded to *fear God, and give glory to him, because the hour of his judgment* (the great and terrible day of the

the Lord) *was come*; and therefore to leave off all false ways and worships, and learn to worship the living God, the Creator of all, in Spirit and in truth. And truly it was a terrible day to the man of sin in us; for the judgments of God were revealed against him, and we in fear lay under the judgment, that we might learn righteousness, and witness the redemption of Sion thereby.

Now being thus turned to that light, and Spirit, and power, which judgeth, it wrought effectually in us against the darkness and power of Satan; searching, trying, manifesting, judging the secrets of our hearts daily. It tried all our knowledge, all our faith, all our desires, all our thoughts, words, ways, and worships; so that all things were naked and open before him with whom he had to do; and what had gone before, as glorious and taking in our eyes, was now manifested to be loathsome and abominable in the sight of God. For indeed the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and every plant which the heavenly Father had not planted was he now plucking up, that they might no longer cumber the ground; but he might have room for his own seeds and plants of holiness and righteousness, which he was ready to sow in his own garden.

And so at length we came to witness (abiding the trial of this dreadful day, wherein our God appeared to us as a consuming fire) a new heaven and a new earth inwardly; and no more sea of wickedness, no more sea of inward trouble; but righteousness, peace, and joy inwardly; and our God becoming a rich portion to us, watching over us in most tender care and love, and delighting in us to do us good, making known to us the riches of the gospel, even the feast of fat things; and giving us to partake of the well or fountain of living waters in our own hearts, which springs up freshly in us daily unto life eternal. So that we were not only invited to the waters, but taught also to come thereto: and when we came, we were not sent away empty, but had the water of life given us; which became such a well, as out of it flow streams of living water. Ah! blessed be the Lord! Did we ever think, in our dry, dead, barren, estate, to have seen such a day as this?

And all this we met with in the way of self-denial, and taking up the cross; in denying our own wisdom, our own knowledge, our own faith, our own righteousness, and all that we could call our own; and owning a little seed of light and life eternal, even the seed of the everlasting kingdom, which the Shepherd of Israel discovered to us, and helped us to search after, and taught us how to find; which was indeed in a way very despiseable, even to the eye of our own wisdom. For thus it was:

We had been long looking out abroad, searching very diligently the scriptures, and other serious books, for great, full, certain, and undoubted wisdom and knowledge; but now we were directed to turn inwards (even thither where we thought no good was to be found) to mind the appearance of God there, the Spirit of God testifying to us (according to the scriptures

scriptures of truth) that the kingdom was within; and there we were directed to search for the least of all seeds, and to mind the lowest appearance thereof, which was its turning against sin and darkness; and so by minding and observing that in us which turned against sin and darkness, we came by degrees to find we had met with the pure, living, eternal Spirit; and by observing the movings, stirrings, guidings, directions, and law thereof, we found, *ere we were aware*, that we had met with the law of the new covenant, the law of the Spirit of life, which had life and virtue in it, to enable us to do the holy will; and then our hearts rejoiced, being made truly sensible that we had found that which we had mourned after, and longed for all our days. And then we began to see our way more clearly, and to wait on our God for his teachings, and to follow the Lamb, our leader, with joy and comfort. For indeed this experience greatly settled our spirits; knowing assuredly, that as none but Christ could do those works outwardly which he did in the days of his flesh; so none beneath his Spirit could do these works inwardly, enlighten inwardly, enliven inwardly, bind up and heal inwardly, open the inward eye, the inward ear, the closed heart, and loosen the dumb tongue, so as the touch of his power, and virtue of his life and holy presence among us, hath done very frequently and livingly.

And now is this testimony nothing to you, O ye professors, that we have found him by God's holy guidance (or rather have been found by him) whom we could never find in your ways and gatherings? But still that which God had quickened in us was there unsatisfied, weary, panting, and gasping, for want of, and after, the breath of life.

Oh! come and see if this be not he indeed! Wait to feel the closing of that eye which cannot see (which God hath ordained shall never see), and for his opening the eye which is as yet blind in you (to which he giveth the true sight), that ye perish not from the way of life, through mistakes and deceits from the mists of darkness, which are yet over all who have not seen the light of God's day. To the law, and to the testimony (to the inward law, and inward testimony, if ye be inward Jews; for the law inwardly written is light, even the light of the living, and the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy); for he that knoweth not these, nor walketh according to these, nor speaketh according to this Word, it is because there is as yet no morning in him.

Oh! come to the morning light of the everlasting day! Come to the Son's light, to the Son's Spirit! Wait for the dawning of the day of righteousness, love, and peace, and for the arising of the day-star. COME, DIE TO YOUR OWN WISDOM (it was the word livingly spoken to me, and entered my soul when it was spoken; never departing from me, though I was long in learning it), and know what it is to suffer with Christ, that ye may also reign with him.

Ah! if that candle were lighted in you, which ye so much reproach and despise the light of, ye might see, that instead of suffering with Christ, that which is of Christ in you (the pure light, the pure life of his Spirit) suffers by you, and the worldly spirit lives (shall I add, and reigns) in you, under all your professions, knowledge, faith, worships, duties, Ordinances, as ye call them, who want the knowledge of the everlasting ordinance, even of the Spirit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ; which is the great ordinance and way of the gospel! And he that is subject to this ordinance shall be saved; but he that misseth of this, shall perish; let him search the scriptures, and practise according to what he apprehends therefrom, as exactly as he can, without this Spirit and power.

XIII.

A few Words concerning the Worship which our God hath taught us.

OUR worship is a deep exercise of our spirits before the Lord, which doth not consist in an exercising the natural part or natural mind, either to hear or speak words, or in praying according to what we, of ourselves, can apprehend or comprehend concerning our needs; but we wait, in silence of the fleshly part, to hear with the new ear, what God shall please to speak inwardly in our own hearts, or outwardly through others, who speak with the new tongue, which he unlooseth, and teacheth to speak; and we pray in the Spirit, and with the new understanding, as God pleaseth to quicken, draw forth, and open our hearts towards himself.

Thus our minds being gathered into the measure, or gift of grace, which is by Jesus Christ; here we appear before our God, and here our God, and his Christ, is witnessed in the midst of us.

This is that gathering in the name, which the promise is to, where we meet together, waiting with one consent on the Father of life, bowing and confessing to him in the name of his Son; and that fleshly part, that fleshly understanding, that fleshly wisdom, that fleshly will, which will not bow, is chained down, and kept under by the power of life, which God stretcheth forth over it, and subdueth it by. So then, there is the sweet communion enjoyed, the sweet love flowing, the sweet peace of spirit reaped, which the Father breathes upon, and gives to his children; the sweet joy and refreshment in the Lord our righteousness, who causeth righteousness to drop down from heaven, and truth to spring up out of the earth. And so our Father is felt blessing us, blessing our land, blessing our habitations, delighting in us, and over us to do us good; and our land yields its increase to the Lord of life, who hath redeemed it, and planted the precious plants and seeds of life in it.

The CONCLUSION:

NOW this ought to be the great care of every renewed mind, even to keep out that which is unclean. The enemy will be assaulting, tempting, casting into the mind that which is unclean; but the pure, chaste mind will not entertain or touch it, but withdraw and retire from it into the place of safety, into the strong tower of defence, from all the assaults and annoyances of the enemy. Such the Lord receiveth, such the Lord delighteth in as his dear children, and in every respect carrieth himself as a Father to; and this is a precious state truly to enjoy.

Now, blessed be the Lord, who hath revealed and bestowed on his sons and daughters, in these latter days, that light of his Holy Spirit, which searcheth the most inward parts, discovering every thing that is of a contrary nature to itself, turning and separating the mind therefrom, and bringing the mind, heart, soul, and spirit under that, which is a cross and yoke to it, and hath power from God to crucify and subdue it; that so life and immortality may be brought to light, and reign in the heart; and death and uncleanness be swallowed up in victory. For this is the intent of the gospel, and of Christ's appearance, even to destroy sin, and bring up the holy seed, and establish the law of the new covenant, the law of love, the law of life, righteousness, and holiness, in which the renewed should walk before the Lord all their days.

And God forbid, but that the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (which is the power of God unto salvation), should attain its end, and the will of God be fulfilled; which is the sanctification of his people in soul, body, and spirit; that they may be wholly leavened with the leaven of his kingdom, and become a new lump to him.

The Lord bring this to pass in the hearts of the children of men, bringing down all religions which have not the true virtue in them; and propagate and establish the religion more and more, which stands in the evidence, demonstration, virtue, and power of his own Spirit; that men may be redeemed out of, and preserved from, deceit, in matters of religion, wherein the eternal condition of their souls is so deeply concerned! *Amen.*

A QUESTION ANSWERED

CONCERNING

Reading the SCRIPTURES aright.

Q U E S T I O N.

How may a Man know, whether he readeth the Scriptures to his Advantage and Benefit? Or whether he readeth them to his Disadvantage or Hurt?

THAT the holy scriptures, written by men inspired by God's Spirit, were of great use and benefit to those to whom they were written (they rightly understanding them, and becoming subject to the voice of God's Spirit in those that wrote or spoke them) is an undeniable truth.

And that they were not only written for them, but for others also, in future ages, who also may reap benefit in the reading of them; this is as manifest.

Yet that men may so read them, as not to understand them aright, but misapply them to their own hurt; that is true also, and hath been often, and is still evidenced by lamentable experience.

The Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, heard and read the law and prophets to their hurt; some in a spirit of direct opposition to the truths and will of God, held out by the prophets; others in a spirit of misunderstanding.

Thus the Scribes and Pharisees, in Christ's time, so read the words of Moses and the prophets (who testified concerning the Son, and his coming,

as that thereby they became strong, wise, and confident, in opposing him when he came. They thought they could prove by scriptures, that *this* was not, could not be He: he was to be a glorious King, and to restore Israel. This was a mean man, a carpenter's son; and so taught, and so behaved himself, that if men *believed in him, the Romans would thereby be provoked to destroy their place and nation.* He was an eater, a drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners, a frequent breaker of the sabbath, a Galilean, &c. *And shall Christ come out of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet,* John vii. 52. As if they had said, can this be the Messiah, of whom the scriptures have so abundantly prophesied, who cometh out of Galilee, out of which the scriptures have not prophesied of so much as any prophet to arise? Thus they read the scriptures to their hurt.

And so afterwards, in the apostles days, men wrested the words of the apostles, as they did also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.

And since, in the apostasy from the apostles spirit, life, and doctrine, and the coming up of many sects, heads, and horns; which of them have not so read the scriptures, as to confirm themselves even in those very doctrines and practices, which are directly contrary to the doctrines, practices, and spirit of the apostles?

Yea, since God's breaking the darkness of the night, and causing the light of his day again to arise, how do men read and understand scriptures? Even so as to oppose this light, life, spirit, and power, now it is again made manifest; thinking and judging its appearance now (according to their understanding of, and apprehensions on the scriptures) to be as contrary to its appearance in the apostles days, as the Scribes and Pharisees judged Christ's appearance in their days, to be different from, and contrary to, what the prophets had prophesied concerning the Messiah.

Therefore it is a matter of very great weight, for a man to know when he reads the scriptures aright, that his table (whereon he feeds, and by which food he hopes to live to God, and be accepted with him) become not his snare, and set him further off from God. For it is as true in this day, as it was in Christ's day; that publicans and harlots are nearer the kingdom, than those who are in the spirit, wisdom, and righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; who have a knowledge, a belief, an hope, a zeal, &c. from a misunderstanding of the scriptures; for this is wrong in a mystery of deceit, which is worse in its nature, and more dangerous to the person in whom it is, and to the souls of others, than the deceit which is openly manifest.

Well then; Is it not worth the diligent enquiry, and waiting upon God to know, *What is the right reading of the scriptures; and whether a man so read them, as is to the benefit and profit of his soul, or to his loss and detriment?* To come then to the Answer, which is as followeth.

Ans. He that reads the scriptures in a true measure of life received from God, he reads them aright; and whenever he so readeth, it is to his benefit.

benefit. He that readeth out of that, readeth to his hurt; that being then up in him, which misunderstands, misapplies, and grows conceited, wise, and confident, according to the flesh; and so he is thereby liable to, and in great danger of, setting up his interpretations, instead of the meaning of God's Spirit; and of condemning that which doth not assent and agree therewith, though it be ever so necessary and precious a truth of God, and ever so fully demonstrated by his Spirit, to those who are in the true faith and understanding.

The true birth is meek, tender, gentle, fearing before the Lord, waiting upon him, often crying to him, that it may not be deceived, that a wrong thing get not up in it; that it receive not any thing for truth, but what he knoweth to be truth; and when the Lord pleaseth to give the true knowledge, that it hold that knowledge of his truth in righteousness, in his life, in his will, in his wisdom, &c. But the wrong birth is not so, nor is its course thus; but that is subtil in searching and forming of things, and holding them in the subtilty, and drawing the wrong part in others to own and acknowledge that, which it represents and holds forth as truth.

There is a wisdom in man, which is against God; which wisdom opposeth the wisdom of God two ways; either in a direct, opposite way, or in a secret, subtil, undermining way. Now no man can come to God, or truly understand or receive the things of God, but as this wisdom comes to be confounded and destroyed in him, by the light and power of God. All its strong-holds, all its subtil imaginations, all its reasonings and consultings must be dashed, and brought to nought, before the truth of God can have full place and power in the heart. Now in the true discovery of this wisdom to man, and in his denial of it, watching against it, and turning to the other; he may wait upon God aright, receive the knowledge of the heavenly mysteries aright, read the scriptures aright, come to the true sense, understanding, and experience of them; but at any time, so far as he is out of this, he is liable to the snare, to the misunderstanding of scriptures, and to the fleshly confidence that ariseth thereupon. So that, having taken up a misunderstanding of a scripture, or some scriptures; he will even boldly venture to speak evil of the heavenly and spiritual dignities, which are of God, and the holy truths which are held forth by his holy ministers; against the prophets in their day, against Christ and his apostles in their day, against the witnesses in the times of the apostasy, and against the angel (learn who that is) that is to preach the everlasting gospel again, after the apostasy. Ah! how doth this wisdom destroy and entangle; and how hath it destroyed and entangled many at this day, who think they are greatly for God in those things and practices, wherein they are directly against him; and that they only oppose error, and a wrong spirit, when they are opposing his truth and his holy Spirit! And it is impossible it should be otherwise, while they judge and act from that which is wrong, and in that which is wrong. Now mark;

The

The Spirit, the truth, the life, the substance, is God's for ever; the unclean spirit cannot enter into it, the unclean womb cannot conceive of it, nor bring it forth; but the letter, the shell, the outward figure, the outward relations and descriptions of things; the other spirit, wisdom, and nature in man may read, guess at, transform, receive, believe, and build up with according to the flesh. And here is the foundation and rise of anti-christ and Babylon, among them who raise up a building, a knowledge, a faith, an hope, a church, a worship, duties, ordinances, justification, sanctification, &c. in imitation of Sion. But they are not the thing itself, but false representations of the thing; either such as were invented by man, or such as were once appointed, and made use of by the Spirit of the Lord. For there is little difference between inventing a new thing, and making use of an old thing, which once was of God, but is now understood, observed, and practised out of the sense, light, and guidance of his Spirit, in another spirit, and according to another wisdom. Now this is not the right way of reformation; to wit, to return to outward (literal) things, which were practised by the Jews in their day, or by the former Christians in their day; but to return to the Spirit that they were in, and to feel (in the true life and leadings thereof) what it teacheth and requireth to be observed and practised now. For there are things, whose value is not in themselves, but in God's requiring of them; which the wrong spirit may get into, and the Lord may draw his people out of them (as he did out of the outward court, into the inward building or temple, by his light and Spirit within, when he gave the outward court to the Gentiles, *Rev. xi. 1.—8.*) And he that is found in those things, after God hath given them to the Gentiles, and drawn his people out of them; is not therein owned or accepted of God, though God may bear with him in the time of his ignorance; yet if he abide in them, after the rising of light, and its testimony, the Lord will not so bear with him; but will condemn him, and deal with him as a transgressor of that covenant, wherein life and peace with him is witnessed.

Therefore, in all things that concern God, whether in reading the scriptures, praying, or observing any thing ye call duties and ordinances; Oh! that ye would approve yourselves Christians indeed, waiting to know your guide and leader, and the true limits which are set by God; that ye may serve him in the true faith, Spirit, and understanding, even in that which God knoweth to be so, and not in that which ye may falsely account so! For mark; if ye be Christians, are ye not in Christ, and is not Christ in you? And are ye not to feel his life, and the guidance of his Spirit, so as ye may live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, read in the Spirit, pray always in the Spirit, believe in the Spirit, worship in the Spirit, and in the holy understanding of his truth, which is of him?

He that would be right in religion, must have a right beginning. How is that? He must begin in the Spirit: his knowledge, his faith, his hope,
his

his peace, his joy, his righteousness, his holiness, his worship, &c. must begin there. He must come out of his own spirit, his own wisdom, the counsels and thoughts of his own heart; and wait on him, who beginneth the work of regeneration and life in the heart.

And he must afterwards diligently watch against that spirit and wisdom, from which the Lord hath led him, that it at no time again enter him; for it will be striving to lead him out of the way, with likenesses, and false images of things, with knowledge falsely so called, with a faith which is not truly of God, nor of the same nature with that which he first felt; with false hopes, false fears, false joys, a false righteousness and holiness, which are not Christ's, nor according to the scriptures; but only such as he apprehends to be so. For a man, who once tasted the truth, and in some measure judged aright, may afterwards err in his palate and judgment; and then take the wrong for the true, not keeping to that, nor being now in that, which formerly gave him the true relish.

Now, he that would meet with the true religion, the religion of the gospel, must meet with the power, receive the power, believe, dwell, and act in the power. For Christ was made a king, priest, and prophet, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: and his covenant is not like the old, in word or letter; but in the same power and life wherein the priests were made ministers.

So the knowledge here, the faith here, the hope here, &c. are not literal, but living. He that receiveth this knowledge, receiveth living knowledge. This faith gives victory over unbelief, and over that spirit whose strength lies in unbelief. This hope purifies the heart even as he is pure. And he that receiveth the righteousness of this covenant, receiveth a living garment, which hath power in it over death and unrighteousness. The beginning of this religion, of this power and holy inward covenant, is sweet; but the pure progress and going on of it much more pleasant, as the Lord gives to feel the growth and sweet living freshness of it; notwithstanding the temptations, fears, troubles, trials, oppositions, and great dangers, both within and without, which the life (which was at first turned to) being still kept to, by the power which is from it, and through the faith which is in it, in its own seasons and way of its own wisdom overcomes, giving the soul that is diligent and faithful to witness, that *all its ways are pleasantness, and its paths peace*; yea, the very yoke is *easy and the burden light*; when the mind and will is changed by the power, and helped and assisted by the Lord in its subjection to the power.

So the Lord God of tender mercies (who pitieth the miserable and erring out of the way, especially those in whom he hath begot desires after himself) remove the stumbling-blocks, and lead the wandering Jews (who are entangled in their own thoughts and reasonings about the letter) into that which is of himself in them, which is Spirit and life, and was before the letter, and excels the letter (with its dispensation) in glory; and is to remain

remain (after the letter) the rest, joy, life, peace, and portion of the soul for ever and ever. So honour the letter, in believing its testimony concerning Christ, who is the Shepherd (to whom the sheep are to be gathered) the way, the truth, the life itself, to whom the soul is to come, and on whom the soul is to wait for life; and having received life from him, to dwell, abide, and grow up into him, who is the life; and not go backward into any thing that is literal, or without life, nor to glory in the knowledge, or literal descriptions of things; but forward, into the spiritual, heavenly dispensation of life and power. The law was letter, the gospel is life and power: the law was a shadow of good things to come; but the gospel is the substance, the life, the virtue, the Spirit of what the law shadowed out. From hence the Christian is to spring; the Jerusalem from above is to be its mother, the Holy Spirit its begetter. And because here the state of true sonship is witnessed, therefore God pours out the Spirit of his Son upon these; and then the Spirit being received, which is above the letter, a life is to be felt and lived in beyond words; even that which the good words lead to, and end in:

And here the truth, sweetness, and fulness of words is known, felt, and witnessed, even in that which comprehends them, and gives them their due weight and measure. Nor can any possibly understand the words of the Spirit, but he that is in the Spirit; and then he knows the place of the words, which came from the Spirit, and of the Spirit from whom the words came. And this is precious; but not to be witnessed by the wise disputer, but by the serious traveller, who first is broken and dashed to pieces in his own wisdom, and then afterwards healed, led, and guided by the eternal Spirit of wisdom, which is the sure and unerring guide.

The Spirit of God knoweth the things of God, and the states of persons, and what is proper or improper for them: he knew what was proper for the Jews under the law and prophets, what was proper for them in Egypt, what in the Wilderness, what in Canaan, and what in their several dispersions and captivities; for the disciples, in the days of Christ's appearance in flesh, for the churches in the days of the apostles, for the witnesses and mourners in the times of the apostasy, and for those who by his power are raised up, and delivered out of the apostasy.

And the Spirit of the Lord doth not only know the state thus in general, but likewise every soul's particular state, and how to apply things to its state. There are some newly quickened, newly come out of the darkness. There are several states and degrees of growth; there is a tempted state, a wandering state, a back-sliding state, a shaken state, an established state, &c. Now there is somewhat proper to every one according to his state, which the Spirit of the Lord knows; and those who are called out by him, to minister in his name and power, know also, as his Spirit pleaseth to teach them, and make manifest to them. All truths are not proper to every state, nor all remedies to every disease. Christ had many things to teach

and say to his disciples, which they were not able to bear; and a man in reading the scriptures, though he should understand the truth of what he reads; yet he is apt to misapply things, as to himself or others, unless the Lord guide and help him. He is apt to apply that to him, which belongs not to him; and thrust that from him, which belongs to him.

Thus may a man easily err and wander, from error to error, and toil and wear out himself in his several apprehensions, ways, and practices (thinking he doth as he ought, and as God requires of him, according to the scriptures) and yet his mind be from that, and his understanding out of that, which opens the scriptures aright, and gives the right use of them.

Therefore wait on the Lord to feel quickenings from him, through a measure of his life revealed, and the mind gathered into, and purged thereby; and then wait for the Spirit's appearing to thee in this measure; further quickening, purifying, guiding thee, and manifesting his truth therein to thee, according as he sees thy need, estate, and condition to require.

And thus thou wilt be like a child, living not upon a wisdom of thy own, but upon thy Father's wisdom, and not gathering a knowledge according to thy own will, and into thy own comprehension; but receiving it as a gift daily from the hands of the Father, and so thou shalt always have it fresh and living, and safe for thy use; whereas that, whilst thou keepest in thy comprehension, and canst run to when thou listest, and make use of when thou listest, putrifies, and yields but corrupt nourishment; feeding not the living, but the dead in thee; and so thy very knowledge corrupts thy mind, and brings it into death; and thou hast only such a knowledge as may be held in the dead part, and so livest and walkest as man may live and walk, without the pure life and presence of God.

So this is the answer which was in my heart (and indeed sprang up in me, as the question was laid before me in spirit). In the true measure of life, which is from God, and one with him, the scriptures are rightly read and understood, in the will of God, by him that doth it in the holy understanding which comes from him: not in a man's own will or understanding; for he cannot understand what scriptures he will, or when he will, or as he will; but he must wait on him who hath the key, who understandeth what is fit and proper for him, to know, or not to know; and so openeth or shutteth in his eternal pleasure, and according to his eternal wisdom; and what he openeth to thee, that is proper for thee to know; and what he shutteth from thee, that is proper for thee (as yet) not to know; but to wait the times and seasons of things, which are in the Father's hand. And so, what the Lord reveals not to thee, that is yet a secret with him, as to thee; but what he reveals to thee, that is thine in his fear and counsel to feed on, and make use of.

So here, in the gathering of life, in the holy building, there is a holy order and wisdom from the Most High, wherein every one waits on the Master,

Master, on the Lord, on the Shepherd, on the Father of spirits, and receives from his hand, what is proper to his state. And so all hold the head, and live by the life, virtue, and teaching that comes from the head. And there is one God who is over all, and one Christ in whom all are, and one Spirit of life in which all are baptized and joined together. And every one as he springs from this life, and feels the union, virtue, and fellowship thereof, so abiding here, he is in his place and service, beloved of the Lord and Father of all, and felt by the life in all, in the unity of the body, and so cherished and helped forward in the love and Spirit, wherein the body is knit to the head; yea, whatever his state be (whether a state of mourning, or temptation, or deep distress; or a state of joy, rejoicing, and peace) yet abiding and waiting on the Lord, he is felt, received, owned, and dearly beloved in the Lord.

I. P.

So here, in the gathering of life, in the holy building, there is a part and wisdom from the Most Holy wherein every one waits and waits for the Lord, who is the Father of all, and felt by the life in all, in the unity of the body, and so cherished and helped forward in the love and Spirit, wherein the body is knit to the head; yea, whatever his state be (whether a state of mourning, or temptation, or deep distress; or a state of joy, rejoicing, and peace) yet abiding and waiting on the Lord, he is felt, received, owned, and dearly beloved in the Lord.

So here, in the gathering of life, in the holy building, there is a part and wisdom from the Most Holy wherein every one waits and waits for the Lord, who is the Father of all, and felt by the life in all, in the unity of the body, and so cherished and helped forward in the love and Spirit, wherein the body is knit to the head; yea, whatever his state be (whether a state of mourning, or temptation, or deep distress; or a state of joy, rejoicing, and peace) yet abiding and waiting on the Lord, he is felt, received, owned, and dearly beloved in the Lord.

A few Words to such as Complain for Want of Power.

BE sure ye receive Christ; for he is the same that ever he was. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power* (not only to stand against sin, but) *to become the sons of God*; he did so formerly, and he doth so still. And they that are true Jews, born after the Spirit, truly circumcised, and are indeed come to Mount Sion, and the heavenly Jerusalem inwardly; feed on God's holy mountain, and dwell in his holy city, in the building that is from above, for the birth which is from above. There is no complaining in the streets of this city, but what God requireth is performed; and what God promiseth to his, is enjoyed there; according to the several states and conditions of each, and according to the ability which is given in the new covenant, where God fulfilleth the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, in the hearts of his daily. Everlasting praises and honour to his name.

Oh! the precious name of Jesus, in which the spirits of the redeemed meet, in which name is power; and he who is the arm and power of God, is in the midst of them.

They who receive him who is the power, who is a spiritual vine and olive-tree to all his, who yields daily of the living sap and virtue to them (wherein there is power); how can they want power? Or how can they but praise the Lord, who daily ministers unto them of the power of the endless life? When the holy life and power springs, and is felt, praises to the Lord cannot but spring with it.

So that it concerns all people seriously to consider, whether the reason why they have not power, be not because they do not receive Christ, who hath all power in heaven and earth given to him. For many talk of Christ, but few come to him in the Father's drawings; so will not receive him; like the Jews who waited for his appearance, and yet rejected him when he came.

7 AP 59

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOMEWHAT

SOMEWHAT RELATING TO
CHURCH-GOVERNMENT,
WHEREIN THE

Necessity, Usefulness, and Blessed Effects of
the True CHURCH-GOVERNMENT, are here and
there hinted at; and this clearly manifested,

That the Authority and Power of CHRIST's Spirit in his Church,
is no usurped or Antichristian Authority, nor contrary to
the True Light and Liberty of any particular Mem-
ber, but a Cherisher and Preserver of it.

AS ALSO

R E M A R K S

Upon some Passages in a late Book, Intituled, "Anti-
christ's Transformations within, discovered by the
"Light within."

WHEREIN THE

Antichristian TRANSFORMER is made manifest, and the LIGHT
within cleared from his false Imputations and Pretences to it.

Written in Obedience to him that is True; who hath given a certain Testi-
mony against him that is False, to very many in this his Day; and,
among others, to me also; whom he hath pleased to gather and own
among his Children and Servants in Truth,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

For God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. 1 COR.
xiv. 33.

*For what have I to do, to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are with-
in? 1 COR. v. 12.*

*The government shall be upon his shoulder, &c. Of the increase of his government and peace, no
end, &c. ISA. ix. 6, 7.*

*Wee unto the world, because of offences; for it must needs be, that offences come; but wee to that
man, by whom the offence cometh! MATT. xviii. 7.*

*For there must be also heresies among you; that they which are approved may be made manifest
among you. 1 COR. xi. 19.*

*Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after
them. ACTS xx. 30.*

For not he that commendeth himself is approved; but whom the Lord commendeth. 2 COR. x. 18.

[411]

P R E F A C E.



IT hath pleased God, in these our days, to cause his true light to shine forth out of darkness. Oh! everlastingly blessed be his name! He hath laid the foundation of life in many hearts, and gathered his once desolate people into families and churches; and hath been with them, and is with them, dwelling among them, preserving them, building up Zion more and more, and causing his glory more and more to appear therein. The living God hath made us a living people, and honoureth us with his living presence, and with the daily manifestations of his pure power. Oh! glory, glory, is founded to him, in his own springing life, in the hearts of his children, day by day.

But the enemy of God and his appearance, hath wrought against his power and work many ways, and hath endeavoured to stop the gathering to the light and building up, not only by outward force, but also by all the devices and mysterious workings he could invent. But blessed be the Lord, who hath appeared against them all, and preserved his remnant from them all; though some that have not watched and lain low, but being soaring high, in that part where the snare is laid and takes, have stumbled and fallen. Yet truth stands, and the gathering in the truth stands; and the life which God hath raised, and to which he hath given dominion, reigns; and much is subdued, and the Lord is going on to subdue more and more under it daily, in the hearts of such as sensibly and livingly, and not notionally and in a dead formal way, wait upon him and worship him.

Now, the worst and most mischievous way of opposing truth, is by pretending to it. Who could more advantageously or readily betray Christ, than an apostle of Christ? And who can be fitter to undermine the light, than he who in words cries it up; and yet is departed from it, and secretly fights against it, and would bring forth, propagate, and set up an hideous, monstrous, comprehensive kind of knowledge (which is contrary to it, and cannot consist with it) in the name of it?

Ah!

P R E F A C E.

dxliii

Ah! that this person, who now appears against the truth, and the church and ministry which is in and of the truth, were but what he pretends to be! For then I should gladly have received his testimony, and not have been thus necessitated to appear against his spirit, and the dark work and testimonies thereof. He saith, there are two christs, both the true Christ and antichrist. I confess his work comes from one of them, even antichrist, who would destroy Christ's work, kingdom, and building, and the ministry which he makes use of, both to plant, water, and build up; but not from that Christ who hath gathered a church to himself, and is with the church which he hath gathered, and blesteth the church which he hath gathered, and owneth them in their assemblings, and in their ministering: which owning and testimony will stand; when the disowning, and false testimonies of all these false apostate spirits, will fall, and end in their own sorrow and misery.

What I have here written, I have written in an holy constraint, in the opening and feeling life of truth, with true love to souls; yea, even of this very person, who is erred so exceedingly from the holy light and Spirit, and its holy testimony, and would fain exalt his critical conceits and notions, above the plain testimony and evidence of truth, in the hearts of God's chosen ones.

The Lord bring down the kingdom of darkness, and exalt his own kingdom in the hearts of the children of men more and more; and add to his church, and keep them in that which will never suffer them to depart from it; or to testify against the life, and power, and presence of the Lord, manifested, dwelling, and ruling in it! *Amen.*

REMARKS

R E M A R K S

Upon some Passages in a late Book, intituled

ANTICHRIST'S Transformations Within, &c.

THE first thing that I shall observe is, *That he doth deny that man hath any rule, power, dominion, government, or authority, either given or committed to him from the Lord, as pertaining to the conscience in things relating to the worship of God.*

Remark. God sent Christ into the world, and he gave him power and authority in his name to do whatever he required of him. And Christ sends his servants and ministers into the world, as sheep among wolves, and he gives them power and authority to do whatever he requires of them, and which he expects from them, and would have done by them. And their work relates to the conscience, and to the worship of God; and their power and authority extends thither, where their work lies. They are ambassadors of Christ, and they have power and authority in Christ's stead to beseech men to be reconciled to God. For as Christ came in his Father's name, to fulfil the work which the Father gave him to do, so they come in Christ's name, to fulfil the work which he gives them to do. They have power to feed the flock; they have power to watch over them; they have power to build up in that which is good; and they have power and authority to testify against and hammer down that which is evil; they have power to reprove; they have power and authority to visit with a spirit of meekness, and power to come with God's rod, yea, with his sword, and to smite that with it which riseth up against the truth, against the life, against the Spirit, against the holy way and work of the Lord, and holy order and government of his Truth and Spirit.

That Christ hath sent forth his servants, his ministers, his ambassadors, about things relating to the conscience, is so manifest, that it cannot be denied. But that he hath sent them forth with power and authority in things pertaining to the conscience, relating to the worship of God, that this man denies; but all that have received the truth, hold the truth, and keep the truth, cannot but acknowledge it

Now

Now the reason he gives why he denies man any rule, power, dominion, government, or authority, either given, or committed to him from the Lord, as pertaining to the conscience in things relating to the worship of God, is because it belongeth to Christ the light, the invisible power which dwells in men and women, &c.

Rem. All power in heaven and earth was given to Christ, and belongs to him; that is freely granted. But the question is, whether he hath not given of this power to his children, and his servants and ministers, as his Father gave of it unto him? Doth not he give power to as many as believe in his name to become sons of God? Did not he make his apostles able ministers of the new covenant, in the Spirit and power which he gave them? *All power is given me in heaven and in earth*, said Christ, *Matt. xxviii. 18.* Go ye therefore and teach all nations, &c. *ver. 19.*; but wait at Jerusalem for the power first, *Acts i. 8.* So when the power came upon them, it led them forth in their work, and they had power to gather, and power to build up, and power to govern and watch over the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, *Acts xx. 28.* And Paul speaks of the power the Lord had given him to use sharpness, even against those in that church of Corinth, who would not be subject to him in that which he had received from the Lord, *2 Cor. xiii. 10.* But this power was to edification, but not to destruction. For though he had power from Christ the Lord, and did by that Spirit, and in that power, deliver Hymeneus and Alexander unto Satan; yet it was not that they should be destroyed by the Devil, but that, by feeling themselves out of the truth, and under the dominion of a wrong spirit, they might come to true sense and understanding, and learn not to blaspheme the truth, nor the dignities whom God hath made honourable in the truth, *1 Tim. i. 20.* And not the apostle only, but the church of Corinth, had a share in the same power; and therefore the apostle, knowing what was given and committed to them, exhorts them, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when they were gathered together, and his Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one to Satan: but this was not for destruction, to destroy the soul; but to bring it back into a state of edification and salvation, which now, by departing from the truth, it was gone from. It was indeed for the destruction of the flesh, but not of the spirit; but that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, *1 Cor. v. 4, 5.*

Secondly, The next thing I shall observe is this: he saith, *There is no glory to be given to man, although he be born of the light.*

Rem. That glory and honour is to be given to man, which God gives to man, who hath said, *Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed,* *1 Sam. ii. 30.* He that brings his deeds to the light, they being justified and approved there, he hath honour in the light. His deeds being made manifest that they are wrought in God, that is honour enough for him, *John iii. 21.* The children of light seek

for glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal life; and that glory and honour they have, and eternal life from God, *Rom. ii. 7.* They seek not the honour that is from men, but the honour that cometh from God only, *John v. 44.* the honour in the truth, in the life, in the power, which God gives them in the hearts of all that are truly sensible and living. For honouring the Lord and his truth, how can I but honour those that are honourable in his eye, and who are glorious in his truth! For indeed the children of light, the tender, the humble, the contrite and broken-hearted ones, are glorious in his eye, and the Lord doth exalt them in due time; for after the true humility, and in the true humility, they come to partake of the true honour, *1 Pet. v. 5, 6.* And so every true Jew, every true servant, every faithful steward, every true minister, that is faithful in the use of his gift and talent, hath praise of God, *Rom. ii. 29.*; and they that are of God, honour those whom God honours, glorifying the Lord for them, and honouring them in the Lord, *2 Cor. viii. 18.* Oh! how could this man say, there is no glory to be given to man, though he be born of the light, when-as *the king's daughter is all glorious within*, and man in that birth is nothing but glorious in the eye of the Lord! Man, having sinned, fell short of the glory of God; but coming out of sin, cometh into the glory again, and is daily more and more changed into the glorious image of the Son, from glory to glory, &c. *2 Cor. iii. 18.* The aim of God is to bring many sons to glory, *Heb. ii. 10.*; and as they come out of darkness and sin into light and holiness, they come into the glory, and are in the glory. Is it not their glory in the Lord, and in his light, to be owned and acknowledged by them that are one with them in the same light? They who love God, and honour God, cannot but love them, and honour them, who are begotten by him, and who are in an especial manner made use of by him in his Service, for the good of souls, and for the preservation and building up of the church. The apostle speaks of double honour to be given to the elders that rule well, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine, and would (from the Spirit of God) have them counted worthy of it, *1 Tim. v. 17.* How far is this man from the apostle's mind, who would have no glory given to any man, no not to the children of light, nor ministers in the light, who in the apostles days were the glory of Christ! *2 Cor. viii. 23.* Yea, the just that live by faith in Christ, and are gathered by him out of Satan's kingdom into his spiritual kingdom, and walk in the light, as God is in the light, there light doth shine in them, and they do shine as the sun in the firmament; and they that are honoured by the Lord to turn many to righteousness, do shine as stars: and though one star differs from another in glory; yet all that come into the true nature and heavenly image of the Son, do come into a measure of the true glory, and have some of the glory given them which God gave to Christ; and in that are glorious, partaking of his Spirit, kingdom,

dom, power, and holy dominion over sin and Satan, all which is truly glorious, *John xvii. 22.*

Thirdly, The third thing I shall observe is this: he saith, *All is to be given to Christ, the light in man, unto whom alone it doth belong, who is the true minister, and hath power in himself to teach all the sons and daughters of men, &c.*

Rem. That Christ is the true minister, that is not denied; but doth not Christ, who is the true minister in the power of the endless life, send forth disciples and ambassadors in the same power, and make them, through his Spirit and power, able ministers of the New Testament? And they that hear them, do they not hear Christ? And they that despise or deny them, do they not despise or deny Christ? And doth not Christ say to the seventy disciples, *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me?* *Luke x. 16.* It is antichrist that so vainly pretends to set up Christ, or his light, or Spirit, or power, as to deny those that are sent of him, and minister in his name. As man is in the fall, he is corrupt, and his works are out of God, and he is there to be denied, ceased from, and not accounted of; but in the restoration, in union and fellowship with the Lord, he is a worker together with God, and is there to be owned, and hath a share in ministering out of the heavenly treasure that dwells in him. So Christ was the great Minister, who had the fullness; and they that have gifts from him for the work of the ministry, and who minister in and from the gift, and in that are able and faithful, are esteemed and accounted as ministers by him. So saith the apostle, *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, Amen,* *1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.* And Paul saith, he was made a minister of the gospel according to the gift of the grace of God given unto him, by the effectual working of his power, *Ephes. iii. 7.* Now the gift is given, not to those that are wise after the flesh (unless that wisdom is first broken); but to such as are mean, poor, weak, low, or some way or other contemptible in the eye of man's wisdom, and easy to be disregarded and despised by men. Yea, it is hard to despise the man whom God sends, without despising his gift in him; and the gift cannot be despised or rejected, without despising or rejecting him that gave it; as the apostle told the church of the Thessalonians, he that despised or rejected, despised or rejected not man, but God (who gives his Holy Spirit to them whom he sends forth to minister in his name), *1 Thess. iv. 8.* He had been beseeching and exhorting the brethren by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as they had received of them how they ought to walk, and to please God, so they would abound more and more. *For ye know,* said he, *what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus Christ.* Mark: the apostle did not only turn them to the Word of life and power in themselves; but did give them

commandments from the Word of life in him, and they received of them whom Christ sent forth, how they ought to walk, &c. ver. 1, 2. And life hath not lost any of its authority; but the power may teach and command others through any vessel when it pleaseth; and they that are the true sheep, know the voice of the true Shepherd, speaking either in their own hearts, or through any other instrument unto them. And the voice of wisdom in any, is in every age still heard and justified of her children; and he that is of God heareth his voice, in those whom he sends in this age, as well as in former ages; and he that is not of God heareth not his voice; and hereby the Spirit of truth and spirit of error is known in this, as well as in former ages, 1 John iv. 6.

Fourthly, The fourth passage I shall take notice of, is in these words: *Wherefore, said he, whosoever doth exalt Christ the light, who is the true Minister, before themselves, by Christ the light within shall those be exalted.*

Rem. This is very different from what went before: for before he denied all glory and exaltation at all to man, although he be born of the light; here he speaks of exalting Christ, the true minister, before themselves; which doubtless every true minister, and every child of light, cannot but do; and herein he confesseth they shall be exalted by Christ the light. Then glory is given to them; and he that sees them thus exalted by the light, cannot but esteem them, as so honoured and exalted by Christ, and give them that glory which Christ hath given them. And happy would it be with this man, could he see the true church, which God hath brought out of the Wilderness, and beautified and gloriously built up to a great height; and the elders and ministers whom he preserveth, and is with, and makes use of in his service, and give them in his heart the honour and glory which God had glorified them with. But that he cannot do, till he come out of Babylon, and out of that dark and confused spirit wherein he wrote these things, into that light and holy Spirit of truth, which discovers what they are (to those that are in the truth), and condemns the ground and root out of which they sprang.

Fifthly, The next thing to be observed by me is this: *He layeth it down as his judgment, faith, and belief, that whatever is written to the churches, ought to be written from God's infallible Spirit, and the Word of eternal life; wherein I am one with him: for what good can any thing do the living, but what comes from life, and from God's infallible Spirit, which alone is able rightly to exhort, advise, admonish, warn, and build up the spiritual? But his inference thereupon is that which is before me to take notice of. Wherefore, saith he, your paper to the churches is not to be owned by the churches, inasmuch as it was written from a sight, or a sense, and from the sensible part, and not in and from the Spirit of Revelation.*

Rem. God hath, in his holy church and living people, opened the eye that was once blind, and daily anointeth that eye, giving a true sight, and in the springings of life giveth a true sense; and that which giveth this, is the Spirit

Spirit of revelation; and what is written in this sight and sense, is written from the Spirit of revelation. And the called people of the Lord wait upon the Lord, that they may be kept in this sight, sense, and Spirit, in what they do at all times; but more especially when they consider of things relating to the churches, even to the welfare, holy order, and peace thereof, that God's Spirit may have its scope every-where, and nothing else have place in the churches of Christ. And though every one be not an eye and ear-witness of what is to be considered of for the good of the churches; yet every one waits to feel things in the opening and springing life, and in that to speak, consider, or write. I have often seen the carriage of things after this manner, to the joy of my heart, and causing of my soul livingly to bless the Lord for it; and therefore may I, yea ought I, now thus to speak this testimony, which the Lord hath livingly given me, being at this time required of me. Oh! that men knew the seriousness and solemnity of our spirits before the Lord, in our considering things relating to his church, and how we retire out of man's wisdom (affectionate part, and comprehending part, as he speaks) to feel the springing life, and God's holy guidance there; and how the Lord doth satisfy and bless us with it! So that we can say, in truth and uprightness of heart, not we (as men) of ourselves do things on truth's account; but he on whose shoulders God hath laid the government rules and reigns among us; and things are ordered by his counsel and wisdom to his praise. And the peace and comfort of God's Spirit remains with us, in the midst of all the reproaches and oppositions we meet with from that evil spirit, which envieth and opposeth us many ways. This one word more is with me, as to this particular: God hath given believers, his church, senses exercised to discern both good and evil; and those senses are not without the true life and Spirit, and every motion and action of them is in that life, and in that Spirit.

And whereas he further saith: *Whatsoever is written, declared, or given forth, in the sight, or in the sense, or from the sensible part, it is not to be owned; for the sensible part is that which hath been in the transgression with the woman, &c.*

Rem. Herein he is greatly mistaken: for friends in truth do not speak, or write, or admonish, or reprove, or give warning from that part; but from the sight and sense which God gives to his own birth; and it is the Spirit of God that gives both the sight and sense, and speaks through them; and those whose ears are circumcised and opened know the voice, and give glory to God, and are obedient to his Spirit, when it gives advice and warning through any; which those that are in the comprehending part, and consider and judge in that, cannot have the sense of.

Sixthly, He saith, *Antichrist will bring a veil over the understanding of men and women, and yet they, for the present, cannot perceive it.*

Rem. This is very true. I would he and others, who are veiled by antichrist, did see it; for then he would not esteem those veiled whom the Lord

Lord hath unveiled, nor attribute these sayings of his, and this his book, to the light within, which those whom the Lord hath unveiled, and keepeth unveiled, in his pure Spirit and quickening life, know to have come from the darkness within, and not from the true light; but the true eye, in the truly living, sees through it, and hath no union with it; but returns it back thither, from whence it came. Oh! how deeply doth antichrist blind and deceive men; that that which is their own state, they cannot see to be so! But apply it to others, whose state it is not, and so justify themselves in that wherein God condemns them, and condemn others in that wherein God justifieth them! This is sad work, and will have a sad issue!

Seventhly, He saith, There is an invisible woman in every visible man, and there is an invisible man in every visible woman; and the man Christ Jesus, who is the light of the world, be is in them both, &c.

Rem. Is not he now in the notional and comprehending part, muddling himself and others (whose ears are open to him) about a woman in a man, and a man in a woman, and Christ in both? Whereas truth is a plain thing; which they that come to feel and abide in, feel and witness redemption, and preservation out of the comprehending part, and the dead notional knowledge thereof.

Eighthly, He saith, He doth not own the judgment and opinion of those ministers, nor yet their superiority, who say, he that is not justified by the witness of God in friends, is condemned by it in himself.

Rem. I shall not now argue that there are true ministers, and that there is a true superiority (some being greater and some less in the covenant and life of truth), which every one that heareth and learneth of the Father, and so is taught of God, will own: but to the thing itself. The witness of God is but one in all, and it condemns nothing but what is not of God; and what his witness in another condemns in me, his witness in me (whenever it ariseth and speaketh in me concerning that thing) cannot but condemn also.

It is true, as he saith, that *justification is by Christ alone, who is the head in every member, &c.*

Rem. But Christ is in other members also, as well as in one; and his life hath power to judge and condemn; and it judgeth and condemneth nowhere, but that which is to be judged and condemned. So that where-ever Christ's life in any judgeth and condemneth any thing, that is judged and condemned by Christ. And the saints have power and authority in Christ, not only to judge and condemn the world, but also to judge and condemn fallen angels and spirits. To what end are they bid to try the spirits, if after they have tried them, they may not judge and condemn what they find life and truth judging and condemning?

Ninthly, He excepts against that passage in friends paper (as he recites it) that none are to minister, but those that are reconciled to the church, and have the approbation of the elders.

Rem.

Rem. What is the end of ministering, but to gather out of the world into the church, or to build up the church? And are they fit to do either, who are not reconciled to the church? Or whom the Spirit, life, and power in the church and elders hath not unity with?

He further saith, *That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and not to the church (saith he); he remembers no such scripture.*

Rem. God added to the church such as should be saved; and were they not reconciled to it before they were added? And Christ said, concerning that brother that would not hear the church, that he should be looked upon as an Heathen or a publican; and are such as will not be reconciled to the church, nor hear it, allowed by God to minister, either to gather into the church, or to build up in it? Ah! surely it cannot be. There can be no true ministering out of the life and Spirit of the body, or church that is in God. And all such as have thus gone out from God, in whom the church is, have ministered against the life, Spirit, and power, but not in it; but in antichrist's spirit and power, and against the truth.

Tenthly, He saith, *Christ the light within, will not give his power and authority out of his own hand to any man or men; for unto him alone is all judgment in heaven and in earth committed in matters of conscience.*

Rem. Is Christ's power given out of his hands, when his life and Spirit in one judgeth concerning that which is evil and out of the truth in another? Doth not the spiritual man judge all things? Doth not Christ teach and enable him so to do? Is there not such a gift of his to discern spirits? Cannot the ear that is circumcised, and kept open by the Lord, try speeches and actions, and discern when they are out of the life, and when in the life? And doth he give the power and authority out of his own hands, in enabling them so to do? What dark expressions are these, and dead too; not so much as literally true?

Eleventhly, He saith, *Christ the light within is able to break, and he is also able to bind up that which he hath broken, and to heal that which he hath wounded, &c.*

Rem. And hath not Christ put a spiritual rod and sword into the hands of his church and ministry, with which to smite and wound, as his Spirit guides and leads them? Have they not power both to bind and loose as Christ saith? And is not this a wounding and healing virtue and power? After Christ had said, *Tell the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man or a publican*; doth he not immediately add, *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven?* Matt. xviii. 17, 18. Is not this power and authority necessary to the true church? What! a church, and not have power over her own members; but every one left to the dictates of what they shall call the light within, and not be subject to the judgment of the true light, Spirit, and power of Christ, the head in the living body? What a church was this? A mere Babel,

bel, and heap of confusion, a body that would never be at unity in itself. But God is the God of the order of his own Spirit, life, and power; and not of such confusion. This doctrine may go for truth in Babylon, but can never be owned in God's Jerusalem, where his Spirit did build up and defends the buildings, and judgeth out all such sandy and windy doctrines, which are loose and airy, and have not a ground or bottom in the truth.

Twelfthly, He saith, *There is fallibility attends all those, who are regenerated, and born of the Spirit of God, who is light, and that it is possible for them to err from the light again, &c.*

Rem. He doth herein lay the state of the truly regenerate and born of God lower than the scripture lays it. The scripture saith, *Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*, 1 John iii. 9. And again, *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not*, chap. v. 18.

There is a gathering into the seed, and an abiding in the seed; and there the soul is in the strong tower, and munition of rocks, where the enemy cannot reach. Adam in the fall was in a fallible state. Is the renewed, the redeemed state as fallible? What state is that wherein truth is so natural, and the soul so one with it, that it can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth, as Paul speaks? What state is that, wherein men overcoming, shall become pillars in the house of God, and shall go no more out? *Rev.* iii. 12. But let men be ever so fallible, the infallible Spirit and power is given to the church of God, to guide them in true understanding and judgment, especially in all things that relate to and concern them as a body; and they that are of the truth, and in the truth, love the judgment of Christ the head in her; but they that are of another spirit, and would have liberty out of the truth, to the transforming nature and spirit, cannot abide it. What were my life in me, if it did not judge in me? And what were the church's life, if it did not judge in her, and condemn all that riseth up from a contrary spirit and nature? What means that promise, *Isa.* liv. 17. *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment, shalt thou condemn?*

Yet he confesseth, *That God is infallible, and that no fallibility attends him; but denies the very regenerate and born of the Spirit to be infallible, and that it is possible for them to err from the light again; the enemy, which is the power of darkness, presenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge, &c.*

Rem. If God be infallible, as he confesseth (though it is to be questioned, whether from any true knowledge of his nature, or only from the comprehension), and God beget children; into what doth he beget them? Whether into a fallible nature and spirit, or into his own nature and Spirit, the least degree whereof is infallible? When men are truly turned to God, there are great and precious promises made to them, which through faith, obedience, and diligence, they come to enjoy, whereby they are made *partakers of the divine*

divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4. And when they partake of the *divine nature*, do they partake of a nature that is fallible, or infallible? *He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. And is that one Spirit a fallible, or infallible Spirit? There is one baptism, wherewith the truly living are baptized; and doth that baptism wash away that which is fallible or no? The church of Christ, the body of Christ, the spouse of Christ, the chaste virgin that is married to Christ, is one with Christ: is it one with him in fallibility, or in infallibility? Bear with me, for I am constrained to speak these things for truth's sake, for the church's sake; yea, for Christ's sake, and for the sakes of them who cry up the light within in words, and yet are deceived about it, and know it not; but are erred from it, and have set up the darkness of antichrist in their minds, instead of it, which with them goes for the true light; and in this they judge that which is true, as if it were false, and justify that which is false, as if it were true, both in themselves and others; both which are an abomination to the Lord.

He saith, *There is a fallibility attends all those that are regenerate, and born of the Spirit of God.*

Rem. What all? Those that come to the highest pitch, and greatest growth, can they not pass fallibility, and arrive at infallibility in a measure, and abide in it? To be regenerated and born of God, is an high state; it is not for every notionist and comprehender to be talking what is experienced there. There is a regenerating, and a being regenerated. There is a following Christ in the regeneration, and there is a conformity to him in his death, and in his life too. It is not good for him to be speaking much concerning that state, but rather to wait to be led into it, and to arrive at it in the true travel. But how he that is regenerated is one with Christ (and is in the measure as he is) is hard to be known, and harder to be uttered. But he that is in this state, hath witnessed the holy calling, and faithfulness to him that called, and the election, and is one of the chosen, or elect of God; and Christ saith, such are beyond fallibility; for speaking of false Christs, he saith, *If it were possible, they should deceive the very Elect*, Matt. xxiv. 24. plainly signifying, that it is impossible.

Now their possibility of erring he lays upon the enemy's presenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge, whilst they are in Eden, p. 6.

Rem. The enemy's presenting temptations, doth not imply a possibility of letting in the temptation, and so of erring, in all to whom he doth present things. For he presented things to Christ, and yet it was impossible for that Spirit and nature that Christ was of, to let in his temptations.

But then, immediately in the next words he sheweth, *How this possibility of falling is upon the enemy's presenting to them the fruit of the tree of knowledge; namely thus, Their minds taking delight in it, and they feeding upon it, the enemy hath power to draw their minds out of Eden again.*

Rem. The regenerate and born of God, are partakers of the divine nature, and wait on God for living food, and receive it of him, and live by

it, and cannot abide dead, dry, notional food, nor feed upon it. Blessed be the Lord, there is that birth known, which can feed on nothing but life itself. And let the power of darkness present the fruit of the dead tree ever so often; the living babe will not meddle with it, but hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and desires the sincere milk of the pure living word, that it may grow thereby. And if this holy nature be put into the babe, how much stronger is it in those that are grown in truth, and who come to be naturalized into it, the contrary nature being crucified, and slain in them by the cross of Christ, and the new and holy nature ruling in them?

Thirteenthly. He saith, *Wherefore I do believe that I ought not to subject myself to what the church imposeth.*

Rem. The church of God under the law, walking in that outward covenant, was a glorious camp or body, and had outward power, according to the outward law, appertaining to it. And the church of God under the gospel, walking with God according to the covenant of the gospel, is a glorious, spiritual body, and hath inward power belonging to it; and though not the church merely as men, yet that Spirit and power in the church, ought to be obeyed by every member thereof, in things pertaining to God. So it was in the apostles days; they that were not disorderly and unruly, were obedient to the Spirit and power of God in the apostles and churches then, 2 Cor. vii. 15. and chap. xxix. who had power to judge those that were within, 1 Cor. v. 12. And those that are indeed of God, will be obedient and subject to his Spirit and power in his church now. And there is nothing else desired, but obedience to the Lord, as he moves, guides, leads and orders, both in the particular, and in the general.

His reasons why he doth not believe that he ought to subject himself to what the church imposeth, are these: *For then, saith he, I must believe that it is God in them, which doth impose those yokes of bondage upon their brethren.*

Rem. The church is called into the liberty of the gospel, and her children are born of the word immortal, and of the truth which makes free; and it is not the church's nature, either to receive or impose yokes of bondage, but to stand fast, and to exhort all her members to stand fast, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. But where there is any thing unruly, or contrary to the power, that is to be yoked down by the power.

And the particular waiting upon God in his Holy Spirit, light, and power; the Spirit, light, and power, will discover what is disorderly, and unruly, and not of God in the particular, and lay a yoke upon it. The church also waiting upon God, in their meetings together in his name, the Lord will discover what is hurtful to the body, and contrary to the life of the body, and lay yokes upon it; and he that refuseth this yoke, keeps alive that which is impure and fleshly, and keeps down the just in himself.

But,

But, indeed, he that doth not believe God in his church, and that his Spirit, life, and power, sits as King there; he is not in a capacity to obey aright, because he doth not discern nor acknowledge that in the church, which alone is to be obeyed.

Another reason he gives is, *Because (he saith) he must also then believe that the church is infallible, and cannot err.*

Rem. The Spirit of God is infallible, the power whereby the church was gathered and built up, is infallible. Christ is infallible, and hath given to his church of his infallible Spirit; without which they cannot be preserved or act aright: and is the church in God fallible? And this Spirit will not fail them in their waiting upon him; and the church which is one with Christ, married to Christ, joined to Christ, partaketh of his holy, living, and infallible nature.

Judge in the truth, how it would suit: an holy head, an unholy body; a living head, a dead body; an infallible head, an elect and chosen head; but a body very liable to be deceived and err. Hath not the church that Spirit, that life, that power of the Lord Jesus Christ her head with her, that is able to keep her from erring? And is it not her earnest travail and desire to keep to it herself, and to have all her members kept to it? And will not that power keep and preserve all that keep to it?

He addeth further to the foregoing words, *Which thing I cannot believe, for then I must believe these particulars following.*

First, *I must believe that they are as infallible as God is; and that it is as impossible for them to err, as it is for God to err.*

Ans. No. A man may believe that God hath given to his church a glorious proportion of his Spirit, to dwell in them, and guide them, as his sons, spouse, and wife; and that they are married to him that is infallible, and partake of a blessed proportion of his nature; and yet not believe that they are as infallible as God is. The Lord is absolutely infallible of himself; what infallibility the church hath, is by gift, by union, and communion with the Lord her husband and Maker.

But doth he believe, or will he go about to maintain, that the church hath nothing of the infallible Spirit of her husband? Or that she is to act in a fallible spirit? Or that she is to act nothing at all? But only direct men to the light and Spirit within, and let her members alone, though she infallibly (by the infallible Spirit and power) know that they are deceived and err, and see (with the anointed eye) that they are going from, and acting contrary to, the light in their own particulars? If she should do so, she would shew little care over her children, and small regard or faithfulness to him, who hath entrusted her with his own Spirit and power, for edification and salvation, and not for destruction.

Secondly, *That no man or woman shall ever attain to any higher measure of the grace of God than they; and that they are come to the highest revelation that can be attainable by the Spirit of God.*

Answ. The highest measure of life and of the Spirit is not necessary for the government of the church; but a true measure. And a true measure the Lord hath ordained for his church; and Christ, the Head, is not absent from his church; but present with it, to supply with what wisdom and power he seeth needful. And where is the attainment and growth in grace? Is it in the church, or out of the church? Doth not the Lord add to the church such as shall be saved? And is not their growth there? And if any member be blessed, and grow ever so abundantly in grace, it is the growth of the church, and the church is glad of it. Now if it be a true growth, they would have unity with the church, and mind the peace of the church, and be subject to the Spirit and pure power of life in the church; else their growth is in another spirit, which the true church can never own.

Thirdly, *And that there is no more to be made known by the Spirit of God, in the sons and daughters of men, but what already is made known to them.*

Answ. The particular's owning a measure of life, of truth, of the Spirit and power, doth not argue there is no more to be made known or revealed in the particular. And the church's owning a fuller measure dwelling in the body than in any one particular (for the greatest fullness in any particular doth but go to make up the largeness or fullness in the body), doth not argue that the church shall not grow, or be enlarged or filled as it grows. But if he intend the growth of any departing from the church, or out of the Spirit of life of the church, who hath her life from the Head, and is in unity with the Head, that growth we cannot but deny, finding it by constant trial and experience to be a growth in notion and comprehension, out of the feeling life and power.

Now this kind of growth I do not desire ever to know; the Lord also preserve others out of it, and open their ears to hear the voice of Christ, and of his church, that they may be preserved out of it! For had this been hearkened and kept to, things had been better with many, as to their inward state, and true peace with the Lord, than they have been.

Fourthly, *Or if there be any thing more to be revealed by the Spirit of God, that God will make it known to them, and to none else.*

Answ. The true church doth not limit God where he shall reveal, or not reveal; but owneth God in whatever it reveals in any man upon the face of the earth. For being in unity with God's Spirit, and born of the immortal life, they are in the feeling sense and knowledge of what came from the life in ages past, or in the present age, and are in unity with it; yet they know the Lord revealeth the mystery of his truth and kingdom in the churches, and the growth is in the churches.

Now if any in Lucifer's nature will hearken to that spirit which despiseth God's church, and rend from it, and think to grow above it, and expect this growth in their high notions and comprehensions about things, in that exalted mind, should be owned by the church, they will be mistaken: for the true Spirit, which knows all things, and guides the church, will not guide

guide the church to own any such spirit or growth; but to judge and condemn it in its greatest spreading and exaltation.

There were those in the apostle's days who would seem to be grown high, and to be spiritual, far above the apostles, and such as lay low in the truth, and obeyed the holy commandments, and yet were far short of their life, as may be seen abundantly in his epistles to the church of Corinth. But what saith the apostle concerning such? *If any man think himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord*, 1 Cor. xii. 37. And did not he give commandments about those that were unruly, and would not be subject to the order, power, and government of God's Spirit in the church? And did not the apostle say of unruly persons, and vain talkers and deceivers, that mouths must be stopped? *Tit. i. 10, 11.* What! had the church or ministers, in the first promulgation of the gospel, power to stop mouths? Yea; in the Spirit that was in them, and with them, they knew which were the vain talkers, the unruly, and deceivers; and what mouths were to be stopped, and what power would stop them.

Fifthly, he saith, *Friends, I would have you seriously take into your consideration some of your doctrines and principles which are commonly preached among us, how they can stand with God's sovereignty, dominion, and glory, that either the seed or God should arise in man?*

Rem. Christ preached a seed, even the kingdom, like a grain of mustard-seed, and the seed sown in man. Now if it was sown in man, in his earthly heart, nature, and spirit, then the earth was over it, and did cover it, and it was to spring up or arise over and above the earth, and the pure power, wisdom and glory of the Father to appear to be manifested in it.

Is this such a strange doctrine to him? Where are his spiritual senses? How was he convinced? Was it without the feeling of the seed? If he truly felt it, where did he feel it? Did he not feel it in the earth? Was there not much over it?

I am sure we, who were truly convinced, felt it so; felt the pure seed under suffering, the pure life under, the pure measure of truth under, and much of the earth over it, the Lamb slain inwardly by sin and transgression; and blessed be the Lord, we felt also the earth judged, and removed out of its place; the earth ploughed up, and the seed springing over all that is earthly, and growing up in that which God made new, over that which was old.

And did not God arise outwardly, in the manifestation of his power outwardly, among the outward Jews? And doth not he arise inwardly, in the manifestation of his power inwardly, among the inward Jews? Are the enemies ever scattered inwardly till God's arising inwardly? What kind of convincement or growth hath that man been acquainted with, who never experienced these things?

Now

Now having proposed this, he asketh some questions, which as the Lord shall open my heart I may return answers to; not after a notional way, but as the Lord hath given me the knowledge, feeling, and experience of the thing.

His first question is, *Whether the Light, or Spirit, Seed, and God, be not all one and the same thing?*

Answ. God is the fullness, the seed is a measure and manifestation of him, the infinite fullness. And as he is light and Spirit, so the seed that comes from him, or that the good husbandman sows, is light and Spirit also.

His second question is, *How came this seed of God to be under, or beneath, in man?*

Answ. Any man that knows the truth in holy experience, and hath been tempted, and let in sin upon him, may know what comes then under, and how it comes under. The Spirit by sin is grieved; yea, the Holy Spirit may be quenched, and man may crucify to himself the Lord of glory.

His third and fourth questions are, *What shall raise it up?* And, *By what?*

Answ. to both. The power of God, the Spirit of God, the life of God, entering into its own in man, entering into the witness, raiseth it up, brings that under which resisted, oppressed, and kept it down. The power of the Almighty, by his out-stretched arm, crusheth Pharaoh inwardly, and brings his spiritual seed out of spiritual Egypt, Sodom, and Babylon; in all which the Lord, in all ages, hath inwardly and spiritually been crucified by them that have resisted his Holy Spirit in the pure manifestations thereof; for what is done to it, is done to him. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

Lastly, *Whether the appearance of God in man, to man by his Spirit, be not for the quickening and raising of man, both soul and body, out of a state of bondage and captivity?*

Answ. Yes, it is; but how doth God raise up man? Is it not by joining him to his seed, and causing him to bow to his seed, and suffer with his seed, and deny that which is contrary to his seed; so that the seed, which hath been grieved and burdened with sin and iniquity, may rise up over it, and crush the head of the serpent, in the authority, power, and dominion of the Father's life? Who of the redeemed-ones, that have witnessed true redemption, have not witnessed God bringing that up which was down, low, deep in the heart, and bringing that down, which was high and exalted over it?

But for the raising of God, that is but his misrepresentation of this sound doctrine, and holy experience: for Christ himself, who was God, and the resurrection and the life; yet the God-head was not raised in him, but the resurrection and the life raised that body. And that of him which he soweth in us, and which differeth in the soul, through the soul's sin, he raiseth up
in

in his own holy dominion, in them that come to suffer with it, and to bear the cross with that which crucifieth sin.

This is sound doctrine, and sound experience, universally experienced by all that know the inward truth, and have subjected to it. They have felt what truth was, and where it was; and what it is, and where it is; and what they are in it, and by it; blessings and praises over all unto him, who by the working of his most glorious power, hath brought this about in a remnant whom the Lord hath visited, and shewn mercy to.

Let him wait for true understanding from him who is able to give it, and answer me this one question then, *Doth not the devil, the enemy of mankind, hunt after the precious life, even in those that come to witness redemption in measure from him? And if at any time they hearken to his temptations, and let him in, doth not the life receive a wound? Is not the Spirit grieved? Is not the tender, righteous, living plant hurt?*

Oh! the tender mercy of God to permit his truth, his seed, his Son, not only to suffer for man without the gates of Jerusalem, but also to suffer in man, even in the streets of Sodom, where our Lord was in ages past crucified, and is spiritually crucified to this day! *Rev. xi. 8.*

He saith, *The kingdom of heaven is within all men and women, and heaven is above hell, and the light is above darkness,* p. 7.

Rem. If he mean that their nature is so, I grant it; but if he mean that heaven, or the light which is heavenly, is uppermost in men who are under the kingdom and power of darkness, he is utterly mistaken: for in the kingdom where Satan and antichrist reign, antichrist is there exalted (in that heart) above all that is called God; even above the light, Spirit, and power, which ought to be worshipped and obeyed there, but is not: and there is need of the arm and power of God to be awakened, and to put on strength there, to cut Rahab, wound the Dragon, and bring him under, and to bring up the seed into his heavenly authority, dominion, and power (which is due unto it) in that heart.

He saith, *The seed is to redeem, and not to be redeemed.*

Rem. This is true, relating to the seed, as it is in itself: but as God has bestowed it on man, given it as a gift in man, and it condescends to his condition, descending into the lower parts of the earth, and suffering with man, that it might bring man into its death and sufferings, and so raise him in and with itself; so the mighty power of life, from whence it came, is to be revealed in it, and bring it out of Egypt, and the darkness wherein it finds man, and in the tender love of God to man, bears a share with him. It is not only the Jew outwardly that pierced Christ, but the soul inwardly by transgression pierceth his life and Spirit; and as it comes to true sense and faith, looks upon him whom it hath pierced by sin, and mourns bitterly over him, and turns from and hates that sin whereby it pierced him.

He saith, *The seed in both man and woman is both God and Christ, and is above the seed of the serpent in all, and he is in himself, &c.* p. 7.

Rem.

Rem. Who denies that God and Christ, and the holy seed, which are one in nature, though not in measure and fullness, as he is in himself, is above the seed of the serpent?

He addeth further, *Neither hath man's mind been so blinded, that he could not see his sins by the light*, P. 8. L. 38. (as corrected by the errata.)

Rem. There is an eye that the God of this world blinds, that it may not see the glorious shinings of the light, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And the eye that is blind cannot see, till God opens it. The outward eye cannot see the shining of the outward sun, but as it is opened; nor can the inward eye see inward things, but as the Lord opens it. Paul was sent to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, *Acts* xxvi. 18. So that man's eye is blinded, that though the light shine in the darkness, yet he cannot see, nor walk in the way of the light, but as God anoints and opens his eye; *anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see*, Rev. iii. 18.

But I beseech him, in the tender bowels of love, to consider where his standing is, and what it is in him that brings forth these things; for I am sure it is not the true light, where-with God hath shined in the hearts of his people, and doth shine at this day. He mistakes the true light in others, and calls it darkness; and also mistakes the darkness in himself, and calls it light: and whither, after this rate, may he wander in his uncertain notions and comprehensions; and while he is thus talking of God, and heaven, and the light within, let him take heed lest he be found among them who blaspheme God, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven?

What I have hitherto took notice of, may sufficiently manifest, even to himself, could he retire low enough, where the true understanding and knowledge is given, how he hath erred from the true light, and but pretended to it, and not been led by it, in what he hath now writ.

As for the other part of his book, though I could say much to it, if the Lord did require me; yet finding it chiefly to be matter of notion and criticism, my heart is not engaged to meddle with it; for it is not in me, to bring people into such critical disputes, about an invisible man, or invisible woman, or who was the first invisible man; which one while he seems to call God or Christ, another while the son of perdition, or power of darkness, the first invisible man, as *page* 21. for which I am satisfied, he can produce no scripture; which he requires of friends, for what they assert.

I must confess, I see no profit in his meddling with such things, but rather a drawing the minds of the people into forbidden knowledge, and airy comprehension about the heavenly things, and feeding that part in themselves which should not thus be suffered to fly aloft, but be kept under.

And happy were it for him, if he could feel the truth, feed, and life (which is grieved in him), rise above them, trample them down, and reign over

over them: but he must experience great humility, and a long travel, before he can come to witness this.

As for his denying himself to be of us; indeed he hath sufficiently manifested by this book, and by his strange notions and comprehensions therein, that he is not of us; but a stranger to that life, spirit and power, which hath gathered, guideth, and preserveth us out of such paths as these.

And oh! that he did not hug so many notions (and those very strange ones too, contrary to the truth and holy experience, in the hearts of God's redeemed ones, and the holy scriptures, as hath been already shewed), and get such comprehensions into his brain, concerning the saving power; but wait to descend, and come down thither, where he may feel it in his heart, and that will preserve him, for the future, from such contradictions and confusions, which the other part of his book is also too full of; which, if the Lord please, he may draw forth some other to lay open, for the vindication of truth, and its true testimony, from his spirit and false testimony, uttered in very strange and extravagant expressions; not at all suitable to the nature of truth, but rather to the nature of that dark spirit from whence it came; which the Lord of his tender mercy manifest to him, and redeem him from, into a tender, living, humble sense of the meek and lowly principle of life in the heart.

P O S T S C R I P T.

SINCE the writing of the former, and my not intending to meddle with the rest, there hath something lain upon me, as to some few passages therein also, to write a few words, by way of testimony to one or two particulars therein: but that which mainly lay upon me, was somewhat in relation to his Postscript; he looking upon it as so unanswerable, and yet so plain and clear an answer arising to it in my heart.

First, As to his main controversy with friends, about the *Christ that died at Jerusalem* (he affirming, *That neither justification nor condemnation is by him*; and reproaching friends, *as having gone back to the professors Christ and Saviour, who died without the gates of Jerusalem*, as page 17. 21. 26.); this is in my heart to say:

Rem. Is Christ divided? Is there one Christ that died without the gates of Jerusalem, and another that did not die? Or is it not the same Lord Jesus Christ, who died without the gates of Jerusalem, according to the flesh, and yet was then alive in the Spirit? Do we affirm that the God-head died? (No; we do not so much as affirm, *that his soul died*, as he doth, page 19.) but according to the flesh he died; that is, he who was the resurrection, and the life, laid down his life, and took it up again, according to the commandment of his Father.

Thus we have been taught of God to believe, and thus to hold it forth. And we have no other justifier, condemner, Saviour, or intercessor, than he that laid down the life of the body, offering it up a sacrifice to his Father, without the gates of Jerusalem. *Who is he that justifieth? Is it not God, in and through him? And, Who is he that condemneth? Is it not Christ that died? And where did he die? Was it not without the gates of Jerusalem? Yea rather, that is risen again, &c. Rom. viii. 33, 34.*

Secondly, The next thing that lies upon me to take notice of, is writing against sense, and disowning the exhortation to come to a sense, and to wait in a sense, and abide in a sense, &c. as page 25.

Rem. Though I have given a touch at this already, in the foregoing part, yet there is somewhat more lies upon me. The inward man, the new man, the spiritual man, hath inward and spiritual senses. Christ's sheep have spiritual ears to hear his voice with; and a spiritual eye is given to the spiritual man, to see him who otherwise is invisible.

There is also a spiritual taste to savour and distinguish between that which is living, and that which is dead; between that which is corrupt and unwholesome, and that which is wholesome food: and by the exercise of these senses, the children of God become more and more skilful in discerning between good and evil, *Heb. v. 14.* And in this living sense, the elect cry unto God against their enemies, and are heard and preserved by him, and shall in due time be fully delivered, *Luke xviii. 7, 8.*

The truly living are truly sensible. Indeed, if he could take away the sense of life, and the judgment of life from God's people, it were an easy matter to deceive them with such kind of notions and comprehensions, as he hath brought forth in this his book. But the Lord hath given a living sense or senses to his, and pure living judgment therein; which their minds being kept to, it is impossible for this spirit, or any such like, with all its enchantments, to prevail upon them, because the sheep's ear knows the sound and voice of life, from the sound and voice of death, let anti-christ transform in any of his ministers ever so mysteriously.

He saith, *God is not a sense, nor is his Spirit a sense.*

Rem. It is not for him, in his notional way, to say what God is; he that made the eye, shall not he see? He that made the ear, shall not he hear? Doth he beget his children into a living sense, and bestow living senses upon them? And hath not he the thing in himself much more?

But let me ask him this question; did God, the holy begetter of life, ever beget him into a living sense? If not, he was never of us, if the Lord did, let him wait to be begotten so again, and he shall soon be one of us again, and judge in the true Spirit, life, and power, what he hath here writ and published abroad in the wrong; and he shall no longer believe, that this his writing was written from the testimony of Jesus in him (as he expreßeth, page 21.), but shall experience the life of Jesus condemning it in his own heart, as I am sure it hath done and doth in mine, and cannot but

but do in all that have been gathered to, and abide in, that which keepeth livingly sensible.

Thirdly, The third thing, and that which most lies upon me, is that charge of his upon friends, *That they do show more homage, reverence, and obedience to the form outwardly, than to the power of God inwardly, and that they worship the form beyond the power, because they keep their hats on when they wait and worship in silence; but in public prayer, both men and women either stand up, or else kneel down, and the men all put off their hats: herein (he saith) they worship, reverence, and adore the form outwardly; and the words, more than the word of life in their hearts, &c.* This practice he would have them vindicate, if they can: Indeed he hath sufficiently condemned it, and more than God hath allowed him to do, or will justify him in.

Rem. The thing is nakedly and plainly thus; the great God, by the arm of his power, hath gathered a people to himself, and taught them to worship him in his own Spirit and truth; yea, he hath taught us to be continually retired, and upon our watch, and in his fear, eyeing and regarding him in all we do.

Besides this, he hath appointed us solemn times of meeting together, to worship him; in which times we do, in a more solemn, and after a more especial manner, retire to feel his presence with us, and holy Spirit and power working in our hearts, and ministering to us. And, blessed be the Lord, he is still found, according to his promise, in the midst of us; and doth give us pure breathings after him, and pure sense of him, and pure praises to him; even praises from, and in, that which is pure.

Yet, while we are sitting thus waiting, or when breathings or praises arise, we are not taught or required of the Lord to pull off our hats, or kneel on our knees.

But when the Lord moveth and calleth any forth (for the assembly, or in the name and on the behalf of the assembly) to offer prayer or praises to God; then, to signify our unity in the Spirit, and our joint reverence to our God, we are moved either to kneel, or stand, as the Lord shall incline our hearts, and to uncover our heads before him. And in this we do not adore the form, as our God knoweth and beareth witness; but him who hath taught us the form, and who teacheth us to continue therein, and justifieth us in the use and practice thereof.

And what spirit is this that condemneth us after this vaunting manner, as if he had brought forth such a manifest evidence of our adoring the form, as could not be answered?

The last thing which lies on me to take notice of, is those words about the close of his postscript; *I have yet another book, that is written in and from the Spirit of God; the tendency of which book is, for the overthrowing of all antichrist's ministers in this nation, &c.*

Rem. This testimony lies on my heart concerning him, that he is not in a condition, or capacity, to write or speak in or from God's Spirit. He may

pretend to have written this, or to write another book, from God's Spirit, but he doth but take the name of the Lord in vain in so doing, and the Spirit of the Lord will without doubt, through some of those that are in him that is true, give a sure and certain sound, and testimony, against his false pretences.

Oh! that he could indeed think, or write, or speak against antichrist's ministers, and against the spirit of antichrist; which if ever he be able from God to do, he must first see how antichrist hath prevailed over him, and darkened him, and how he dwelleth and reigneth in his heart, as if he were God; yea, he must deny his present light and spirit, and call it no more Christ; but feel that which is now little and low in him rise (through his sense of it, and subjection to it) over that which is now so high, and so exalted above the measure of truth in his own heart; which, if it were so, or might once be so, how glad would my soul be for his sake, which is now grieved to see him so lifted up, and so mistaken, and so deeply to err, both concerning himself, and God's people, church, and ministers, and concerning God's light and Spirit; denying, debasing, and casting down that, to exalt himself; that so he might set up the wrong instead of the right, and be justified and owned by the one, seeing he cannot by the other!

The Lord, if it be his will, in tender mercy to him, bring him down from his high seat, and exalt that holy blood of the covenant, which is now trampled under foot by him, that his soul may be saved, and not perish for ever (in the day that never shall have end) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. *Amen.*

7 AP 59

SOME

264
P O S T E R I O R
MISREPRESENTATIONS of ME,

Oh! that he could indeed think, or write, or speak against anything.
transfers, and against the Lord, if ever he be able from
God to do, he must first see that he hath prevailed over him, and
humbled him, and how he dwells and reigns in his heart, as if he
were God.
us, and of the subject to it, over that is not to high, and
exalted above the measure of truth in his own heart: which, if it were so,
or might once be so, how glad would my soul be for his sake, which is now
grieved to see him so lifted up, and to desire to cry,
I have seen his power, and his might, and his glory, and his
power, and his might, and his glory, and his power, and his might, and his glory,
CONCERNING
CHURCH-GOVERNMENT, cleared.

AND THE
Power and Authority of GOD'S SPIRIT, in
Governing his CHURCH, testified to.

By one whom it hath pleased the Lord to make a Member of the Church,
which he hath gathered, and preserveth by his own Almighty Arm; who
accounteth it his Duty and Honour in the Lord, to be subject to the
Government and Ordering of his Spirit and Power in his Church.

ISAAC PENNINGTON.

That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and
laboureth, 1 COR. xvi. 16.

Obeys them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch
for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy,
and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you, HEB. xiii. 17.

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be sub-
ject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud,
and giveth grace to the humble, 1 PETER v. 5.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit, and
submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God, EPHES. v. 18. 21.

THE
P R E F A C E.

UPON occasion of the suffering of our dear friends and brethren in New-England, cruel imprisonments, many hard usages, and at last (some of them) death itself, for their obedience and faithful testimony to the Lord, and his precious truth; and because of the undue covering thereof, by the grounds and causes produced to justify their proceedings; I was engaged to shew the nakedness and unreasonableness thereof, in a book, intituled, "An Examination of the Grounds or Causes, which are said to induce the Court of Boston in New-England, to make that Order or Law of Banishment upon pain of Death against the QUAKERS, &c." Whereunto somewhat was added (being very proper to the subject in hand) about the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church, which also occasioned somewhat concerning the true church-government.

Now this latter part (about church-government) hath been so misrepresented, as if, because the wrong church-government was excluded, the exclusion of all church-government was intended by me, there being no notice taken of my owning the true church-government, but only some passages of my disowning the false produced, as if they intended to overturn and deny all church-government, which never was intended by me: for in that very book, which is thus made use of, I did positively affirm the necessity and use of the true church-government, which may more fully appear in that which hereafter follows.



SOME

SOME
MISREPRESENTATIONS of ME,
 CONCERNING
CHURCH-GOVERNMENT, &c.

FOR the manifesting that I am misrepresented, and the clearing of my innocency from those misrepresentations; this is on my heart;

First, To set down those words which John Pennyman hath cited out of that part of my book which speaks of the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church.

Secondly, To add somewhat, in way of confirmation of that truth and tender sense, which was then upon my heart.

Thirdly, To propose some questions, as I shall find them arise in my heart, further to open and manifest the intent of my heart in this thing.

Fourthly, To annex somewhat, which is mentioned and immediately added in the very same part of the book, concerning true church-government; which plainly manifesteth that I was not against the true church government, nor did mention or intend any of those things to hinder, deny, or oppose the true church-government, of which I do there infer an absolute necessity.

Fifthly, It is on my heart to add a few considerations further, concerning the necessity, usefulness, and benefit of the true church-government.

The first words John Pennyman cites out of this part of my book, concerning the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church, from *Matt. xx. 25. to 29.* are these.

Here

Here Christ cuts off that power and authority, which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, which was ever and anon springing up even in the disciples; here he wholly excludes it out of his church, and saith expressly, he would have no such thing amongst them, no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority.

Confirm. It is the full belief of my heart, that Christ hath cut off that power and authority which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, and wholly excluded it out of his church, even very expressly in this forecited scripture; plainly signifying therein, that he would have no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority among his gathered and chosen people.

Quest. But doth this signify or imply, that he would have no authority at all? Doth this exclude the authority and government of his Spirit and power in his church? Doth not he, notwithstanding this, say, *Go tell the church?* And enjoin the members of the church to hear the church, upon the penalty of being accounted Heathens and publicans? And did not the Holy Ghost make and appoint overseers over the church? *Acts xx. 28.* And what is an overseer? Or in what were they to oversee? Were they not to oversee in the true light, to which every child of light is to be subject? And they that did resist the light, Spirit, and power of the Holy Ghost in any of the overseers; were they not unruly, and departers from the light in themselves; though they might pretend they were still for the light, and that it was the overseers that were departed and erred from it?

The next Words he cites are these :

TWO things are here excluded by Christ, from whence all the mischief ariseth in the church, all the tyranny and oppression of mens consciences, and of their persons, estates and liberties for conscience-sake. First, Greatness: Secondly, The exercising dominion and authority by those that would be great therein.

Confirm. It is my belief, that all the mischief in the church, tyranny, and oppression of mens consciences, and of their persons, estates, and liberties for conscience-sake, doth arise from a wrong greatness, and from the exercising of a wrong dominion and authority, by those that would be great therein; and that these two things are here excluded by Christ, in the forementioned scripture.

Quest. But is there not a true greatness? Those that lie low before the Lord, and have humbled themselves under his mighty hand; doth not the Lord exalt them in due time, filling them with his Spirit, life, virtue, and power? And is not that great in them? And are they not highly favoured, and exalted in the eye of the Lord therein? (Oh! none knows how great those are in the eye of the Lord, who are poor and low, and nothing in their

their own eyes!) And is there not a true authority and dominion of God's Spirit in the church in general, as well as in the particular, over the spirit and power of darkness? Because of which Spirit, because of which power, because of which holy authority and dominion, the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against it.

His next citation is this (which though somewhat long, I am willing to recite punctually, that my innocency may the more appear.)

THIS spirit must be kept out from amongst you, this aspiring spirit, this lofty, ruling spirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itself because of the gifts it hath received, and would bring others into subjection; this spirit must be subdued amongst Christ's disciples, or it will ruin all. The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end, than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others because of it. And he, that because of this, thinks himself fit to rule over other mens consciences, and to make them bow to what he knows, or takes to be truth, he loseth his own life thereby; and so far as he prevails upon others, he doth but destroy their life too. Therefore the disciples, or church of Christ, are to watch over every such spirit; to beat it down, to testify against it, to turn from it, to lay it flat, to put it in its proper place, that is, beneath all, and so not to suffer it to arise.

Before I come to the confirmation of this, I judge it meet to set down the foregoing clause or paragraph omitted by him, which will very much help to clear the naked drift and intent of these words. The foregoing paragraph runs thus:

Such a kind of greatness as is in the world, is the destruction of the life of Christ; and such a kind of dominion and authority as is among the nations, is a direct overturning of the kingdom of Christ. It sets up another power than Christ's, another greatness than Christ's, another kind of authority than Christ's; and so eats out the virtue and life of his kingdom, and makes it just like one of the kingdoms of this world.

This (which immediately went before) being thus added, may sufficiently open the thing of itself. Yet for further satisfaction, I shall add a confirmation to the truth of that which he hath cited; and that in several particulars, because of the length of the citation.

Confirm. First, An aspiring spirit, a lofty, ruling spirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itself, &c. must be kept out from among the disciples and church of Christ. There must not be such a spirit, or loving to be great, or such a ruling among them,

as is in the world. No; life alone, the Spirit alone, the humble seed alone, the truth alone, the grace alone, must rule among them; and God forbid the authority and government thereof should be stopt in any. It cannot be well with the church that it should be so, that God's Spirit should be grieved or quenched, or stopped in its holy way of governing and ordering the church of its own building.

Second, That which would exalt itself because of the gifts it hath received, and would bring others into subjection; this spirit must be subdued among Christ's disciples, or it will ruin all. God alone, Christ alone, the Spirit alone, the truth alone, the seed alone, is to be exalted in the church; not flesh, not self, not the aspiring, lofty, ruling spirit.

Third, The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end, than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others because of it. Man, without grace and true knowledge, is high and exalted, and would be ruling over, and subjecting others; but true grace and knowledge brings man down, and keeps him low, even out of every desire of aspiring and ruling over others, in earnest breatheings and endeavours that both the grace and spirit may teach and rule both over himself and others.

Fourth, Because God hath given a man knowledge, he must not take upon him to rule over others with his knowledge. Christ did not rule over his disciples with his knowledge, nor require them to believe what he knew to be truth. Nor may any man at this day, though ever so full of God's holy Spirit and power, take upon him (above what his Lord and master did) to rule over other mens consciences. If he do, he will do it out of the leadings of life, and of God's holy Spirit; and so will wound and hurt his own life thereby; and so far as herein he prevails on others, he will hurt their life too.

Fifth, Therefore this spirit (which Christ never was of himself, nor encouraged in his disciples) the church is to watch over, beat down, testify against, turn from, lay flat, and keep beneath all, and so not suffer it to arise.

Quest. But doth all this hinder, deny, or oppose Christ's Spirit, Christ's power, Christ's truth and grace from arising in the church, in a way of spiritual and holy government? Because man is not to aspire, nor take upon him to reign or rule, because of grace, gifts, or knowledge received; shall not therefore the head govern the body? Shall not life, and truth, and the wisdom of God, spring in the church, to order and govern the church? But must every man be left to the dictates of what he calls light in him, and not be reprov'd or testified against, though the Spirit of God manifest it (to them that are indeed in the light, life, Spirit, and power) that it is not light, as persons may pretend and imagine; but real darkness, gross darkness, darkness that may be felt, even by the least babes that are in the true, living sense?

The

The next Citation.

IF this rule of Christ had been kept to, antichrist's power could never have got up, nor the poor innocent lambs so often have been worried by the wolves.

Confirm. It is most certainly true, if the wrong authority and government had been kept down; if the aspiring, lofty spirit, which exalts itself, and loves to have the preheminance over that which it should be subject to both in itself and others, had been judged, beat down, denied, turned from, &c. how could the spirit of antichrist, which is the spirit that would be exalting itself above all that is indeed of God, have got up? This is the wolf that worries the lambs; and if this power and spirit be kept out of the church, how can there be any wolf found there, to worry the innocent lambs and sheep of Christ?

Quest. But did ever antichrist's power get up by the exercise of the power of Christ in his church? Doth not that power turn against antichrist, and keep out antichrist? Did that power ever worry the lambs? Nay, rather doth it not cherish, feed, build up, and preserve the lambs? And is it possible but antichrist's power should get up, unless this power be watched to, and observed, in its ordering and governing the church, and discovering the subtil working of the wolfish spirit of antichrist; which appears in the sheep's cloathing, and may pretend to the light within, that it might draw men from that which is indeed the light within, into that which is indeed darkness in the sight of the Lord, and in the sight of all that are kept truly living and sensible by him?

The next Citation.

THE great work of the ministers of Christ, is to keep the conscience open to Christ, and to preserve men from receiving any truths as from them, further than the Spirit opens, or to imitate any of their practices, further than the Spirit leads, guides, and persuades them; for persons are exceedingly prone to receive things as truths, from those they have an high opinion of, and to imitate their practices, and so hurt their own growth, and endanger their souls.

Confirm. When the minister of Christ comes with the gospel of Christ, he finds men in darkness, with their consciences defiled, with the door of the heart shut against Christ. Now his great work is to turn them to the light, Spirit, and power, whereby their hearts may be opened, their consciences washed, and there may be a ready entrance for Christ's Spirit and power

into them. Then the conscience being opened to Christ, their great endeavour, labour, and work, is to keep it open, and that that may not be let in again by them, which will shut it against Christ. For as there is one spirit opens to Christ, so there is another will shut, even after the heart and conscience is opened, if a man hearken to it.

And the way of receiving truth, is in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit in one's own particular; and this is for ever the aim and care of the ministers of Christ to keep men to, and not to allure men to receive truths as from them, but from Christ; or to imitate their practices, further than the Spirit leads, guides, and persuades them. For the ministers of Christ are sensible how exceeding prone persons are to receive things as truths, from those they have an high opinion of; and to imitate their practices, and so hurt their own growth, and endanger their souls. Now it lies on my heart to testify, upon this occasion, that I have found the ministers of Christ, whom I have conversed with in this age, walk so towards me and others, still turning me to that light, Spirit, and truth in my own particular, wherein the knowledge of truth was to be given me by the Lord, and not imposing upon me that which they knew to be truth, before the Lord had prepared and fitted my heart for the knowledge thereof. And this is still the course and practice of the ministers of Christ to this day.

Quest. But must not the minister of Christ, who is ordained of God to watch for the soul, watch against that, which (if hearkened to by any particular) will shut the conscience against Christ, and open it to another spirit, who is often working in a mystery to deceive it? And if they see the workings of this other spirit in any, ought they not, in faithfulness to Christ, and to the souls of such, to warn them of it? And if any, having let in the wrong spirit, turn from, and deny, the practices which the Lord once taught them (and wherein the testimony of truth stands) into practices which are of the world, and answer the world's spirit, and tend to weaken the faithful testimonies of others in the true light and Spirit; ought the minister of Christ to leave these persons to their openness to a wrong spirit, and wrong practices, wherein they deny the Lord that bought them and enlightened them, and are shut up against the visitations and testimonies of God's true Spirit and power in his children, who keep their habitations in that light which these are departed from, though they make ever so great pretences to it?

The next Citation.

A*H poor hearts! how simply do they come thither where they once tasted refreshment, to find wholesome advice, not suspecting what is got up there since; and so give dominion to a wrong thing, and take directions from a wrong spirit, and betray their own simplicity? Therefore the main thing is to keep the conscience pure to the Lord, and not to take things for truths because*

because others see them to be truths, but to wait till the Spirit makes them manifest to me; nor to run into worships, duties, performances, or practices, because others are led thither, but to wait till the Spirit lead me thither. He that makes haste to be rich (even in religion, running into knowledge, and into worships and performances before he feel a true and clear evidence) shall not be innocent, nor the Lord will not hold him guiltless, when he comes to visit for spiritual adultery and idolatry.

Confirm. This hath been experienced in this our day, more than once; when some, having departed from the power whereby the innocent lambs had tasted sweet nourishment and refreshment through them, and have come afterwards for that which is wholesome, not suspecting what was got up in them since, and so gave dominion to a wrong thing, and took directions from a wrong spirit, and betrayed their own simplicity.

Quest. But had these resorted to the church, and waited for judgment from the church, to whom God has given eyes to see, in such cases as may pass the eye-sight of the particular, and a mouth to speak; might not the church have been instrumental to have opened the true eye in them also, and so have preserved them from being insnared, by any that ran out from the truth in their own particulars, and lost their habitation therein? And mark, when the church was in its great glory, cloathed with the sun, and the moon under its feet, and crowned with a crown of twelve stars, yet the dragon, even then, might prevail upon some stars, and with his tail sweep them down from their place; but the church he could not prevail upon. The gates of hell, the power of the dragon, the mouth of the dragon, nay the tail of the dragon (which what if I should say is the false prophet within) cannot.

Further Confirm. Indeed, the main thing is to keep the conscience pure to the Lord. To bring men to that which purifies the conscience, and to keep them to it, this is the great work. Men must not take things for truths, because others see them to be truths (that is not God's way, nor did his ministers ever so teach) but to wait till God's Spirit makes them manifest to the particular. Nor must men run into worships, duties, performances, or practices, because others are led thither, but wait till the Spirit lead every one in his own particular thither.

Quest. Where is the faithful minister that teacheth otherwise, or practiseth otherwise at this day? I am sure I never met with any thing of this nature from any of them, but only one that ran out in his own particular, who first endeavoured to draw me from esteeming or taking directions from others, and then would have given me directions himself, and would speak and undertake to prophesy great things of me, that he might have raised up that part in me, which could have answered him. And though he himself be dead, yet his spirit is alive in others at this day, which the Lord discover and preserve his people from!

Further

Further Confirm. It is not good to make haste to be rich (no not in religion). He that rightly believeth, and abideth in the true and living faith, makes not haste to run into knowledge, worships, and performances, before he feel his guide! but rather chuseth to be as a weaned child, lying low before the Lord, in brokenness of spirit, and not meddling with things too high for him; and so he is kept in innocency, poverty, and humility before the Lord, and preserved out of the bed of the stranger (the strange spirit and power), and so not judged or condemned by the Lord, for either spiritual adultery or idolatry.

Quest. But he that lets in a wrong spirit, that mistakes about the light in him, and judgeth that which is indeed darkness to be it, and errs from the true church, and denies the authority of God's Spirit and power in it, and is not preserved thereby, but entangled and bewitched with this wrong spirit, and in it testifies against the true church and the true Spirit, and the ministry and ministers of Christ; is not he joined to the spirit of whoredom in his own particular? And hath not he set up an idol in his own heart, instead of the true light there? And doth not he worship and obey that idol, that wrong spirit, that wrong power? And will not the Lord visit and judge him for his spiritual adultery and idolatry from the true?

The next Citation.

IN the apostles days, Christians were too apt to strive after a wrong unity and uniformity in outward practices and observations, and to judge one another unrighteously in these things. And mark, it is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace and unity, but the judging one another because of differing practices. He, that keeps not a day, may unite in the same Spirit, in the same life, in the same love with him that keeps a day; and he who keeps a day, may unite in heart and soul with the same Spirit and life in him who keeps not a day; but he that judgeth the other because of either of these, errs from the Spirit, from the love, from the life, and so breaks the bond of unity. And he that draws another to any practice, before the life in his own particular lead him, doth as much as in him lies to destroy the soul of that person. This was the apostle's rule, for every one to perform singly to the Lord what he did, and not for one to meddle with the light or conscience of another, &c. but every one to keep close to their own measure, &c. and here is the true unity in the Spirit, in the inward life, and not in an outward uniformity; that was not necessary in the apostles days, nor is it necessary now: and that eye, which so dotes upon it, overlooks the one thing which is necessary.

Confirm. This is so manifest from that scripture quoted by me, which is here omitted, that he that shall read that scripture, which is *Rom. xiv.* may easily observe the apostle affirming and teaching these things.

That

That even in the apostles days, Christians were too apt to strive after a wrong unity and uniformity in outward practices and observations, and to judge one another unrighteously in these things, is manifest from the several instructions and exhortations given to this church, in this chap. as ver. 2, 3, 4. *One believeth that he may eat all things; another who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be bolden up, for God is able to make him stand.*

Yea, in matters of worship (as keeping and observing a day to God, or not keeping it) it is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace, but the judging of one another, because of differing practices. So the apostle plainly holds forth, ver. 5, 6. *One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not; and giveth God thanks.*

And he that draws another to any practice, before the life in his own particular lead him, doth as much as in him lies to destroy the soul of that person. So the apostle signifies, ver. 5. (which was quoted in my book) in that he saith, *Destroy not him with thy meat*, for whom Christ died. So that not an outward uniformity in all things, but an unity in the one Spirit and life, is the necessary thing. And there may be unity, and love, and life, and peace, without an uniformity in practice, further than the Spirit of God teacheth and leadeth his unto.

Quest. But if the Lord hath taught a man, opened the same eye in him that he opened in others, and brought him into unity and uniformity with the church, in the practices which the Lord hath taught it; and he afterwards let in another spirit, and fall from these practices, and judge the very church itself for continuing in them; may not the church testify to this person, that he is erred from his guide, hath lost the light in himself, and so judgeth amiss, both concerning himself and concerning the church of God? This hath been the state of some who went out from among us formerly, and may also be the state of some who go out from us now. For as there is one that gathers to the true church; so there is another that endeavours to draw and scatter from it, and then to cause men to turn head against it, as if it were not of God, but apostatized from the Spirit and principle of truth, which indeed is their own state and condition in God's sight; but not the church's, which was gathered and is preserved by him, glory to the Lord, over all the accusations of the accuser, through what mouth soever he utter them forth.

The next Citation.

O H! how sweet and pleasant is it to the truly spiritual eye, to see several sorts of believers, several forms of Christians in the school of Christ, every one learning their own lesson, performing their own peculiar service, and knowing, owning, and loving one another in their several places, and different performances to their master, to whom they are to give an account, and not to quarrel one with another about their different practices! This is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but because I feel the same Spirit of life in him, and that he walks in his rank, in his own order, in his proper way and place of subjection to that. And this is far more pleasing to me, than if he walked just in the track wherein I walk; nay (so far as I am spiritual) I cannot so much as desire that he should do so, until he be particularly led thereto, by the same Spirit that led me.

Confirm. The spiritual eye beholdeth things aright, beholdeth things in the Lord, and tasteth sweetness in, and is pleased with, that which is spiritual. If every one did eye the Lord, subject to the Lord, answer the light and Spirit of the Lord in their own hearts, though the forms in the school of Christ be higher or lower, the lessons different, and the practices answerable, yet every one minding his own place and lesson, and performing his own peculiar service, the spiritual eye would be delighted therewith. And those that are of the true seed and birth do know, own, and love one another in their several places, and different performances to their master, to whom they are to give an account; and do not quarrel with one another about their different performances. Oh! how sweetly is this practised and experienced among us at this day!

And unity in the life is the ground of true brotherly love and fellowship. Not that another man walks just as I do; but though he be weaker or stronger, yet he walks by the same principle of light, and is felt in the same Spirit of life, which guideth both the weak and the strong, in their several ranks, order, proper way, and place of subjection, to that one Spirit of life and truth, which all are to be subject to.

Nay, he that is truly spiritual and strong in the light and Spirit of the Lord, cannot desire that the weak should walk just as he does; but only as they are strengthened, taught, and led thereunto, by the same Spirit that strengthened, taught, and led him.

Quest. This is true concerning every one that is in the faith, that is in the true light, that is in the true Spirit; and keeps his rank, order, place, and subjection, though in a weak and low degree; but will this hold good concerning any that have erred from the faith, have made shipwreck thereof; and have turned from the true light and Spirit in themselves, and left their

their rank, order, and testimony against the world, and are again become one with the world, even in those very practices which the Spirit of the world delights in, and which the Spirit of the Lord hath testified, and still testifieth against, in all that are faithful, and keep to their first love and light? Is the church to bear with these in their practices, or own such spirits, or believe that they now walk according to the light which first convinced them? Is not the Spirit of judgment with the church? Hath not God given her discerning? Hath she not power and authority from God to try spirits? Yea, and to judge false spirits, that have lost their habitation in the light, though they may still pretend to dwell there; can she not try those which say they are Jews and are not, but have lost the light, Spirit, and power which circumciseth, and keepeth circumcised, and are run back into the uncircumcised paths of the world again, which came from, and answer the uncircumcised spirit and nature, both in themselves and others?

The next Citation.

AND *be that knows what it is to receive any truths from the Spirit, and to be led into any practices by the Spirit, and how prone the fleshly part is to make haste, and how dangerous that haste is, will not be forward to press his knowledge or practices upon others, but rather wait patiently till the Lord fit them for the receiving thereof, and fear lest they should receive and practise too soon, even in that part which cannot serve the Lord.*

Confirm. I will send the comforter, the Spirit of truth, saith Christ to his disciples, and he shall lead you into all truth. Now the disciple of Christ is led into truth, in the cross to that part wherein others may receive the notions of things; yea, perhaps of truth itself. And the disciple must also abide in the cross, after that the Lord hath given him the true knowledge, or he cannot be rightly led into the practice of what he knows. So that the disciple comes very hardly, both by his knowledge, and by his ability to practise, what the Spirit of God teacheth him and requireth of him. There is a fleshly part indeed, prone to make haste; but that haste is dangerous, and that fleshly part, in all its hasty desires and motions, is to be denied, and kept down. And he that is diligent in denying and keeping down that fleshly part in himself (with the forwardness and hastiness thereof) cannot easily be forward to press his knowledge and practices upon others; but will be patiently waiting on the Lord, for their kindly and seasonable understanding of the truth, and growth in it; and fear, lest they should run before their guide, and be practising too soon even in that part which cannot serve the Lord; for the Lord must be served and worshiped in his Spirit and truth; and thither are all to be directed and brought, and there is every mind to be stayed and kept, or it cannot worship and serve aright.

Quest. But what if a man entertain a wrong spirit, and let go the truths he had received, and turn from the practices which God's Spirit taught him, into the spirit and practices of the world, which God's Spirit hath testified and will for ever testify against? Is not the church to deny this spirit, and these practices, and the person that hath hearkened to this spirit, and is found in these practices? That he may turn from this spirit and practices, to the true Spirit, and to the true testimony and practices which it once taught him, and still teacheth all that hearken to its voice and holy motions, and listen not to the voice and instigations of a stranger.

The next Citation.

THE great error of the state of the apostasy, hath been to set up an outward order and uniformity, and to make mens consciences bend thereto, either by arguments of wisdom, or by force; but the property of the true church-government is, to leave the conscience to its full liberty in the Lord, to preserve it single and entire for the Lord to exercise, and to seek unity in the light, and in the Spirit, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of differing practices.

Confirm. That there have been ages of apostasy from the true Spirit and power of the apostles, is very manifest, both by the doctrines, discipline and cruel practices of those, that would have themselves accounted the true church, and true believers and Christians. And that they have set up an outward order and conformity, and have used both arguments of wisdom, and also force, to make mens consciences to bend thereto; this is as manifest as the former. Now that this hath been an error, and a great error, is very manifest also; because it is contrary to the nature of conscience, which is to be led by God's Spirit, not bent by man's wisdom and constraint, and contrary to Christ and his apostles doctrine and practice, who would have every man fully persuaded of what he performs to God, from whom he must receive the reward and approbation, or the dislike and punishment, for his answering or disobeying the light which God sets up, or causeth to shine, in his own conscience.

And the property of the true church-government, and the practice and path of the true church in these our days, is to leave the conscience to its full liberty in the Lord; to preserve it single and entire for the Lord, and to seek unity in the light and in the Spirit, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of differing practices. Nay, it is not the desire of the church at this day, that any should come up into the practice, or holy order of the gospel, according to what the Lord hath taught others, but only as the Lord teacheth and leadeth them.

Quest. Concerning what conscience is this to be understood? Is it to be understood of the tender and weak conscience? Or of the hard and seared conscience?

conscience? For the conscience which God once made tender, may afterwards come to be seared and hardened. And is the church of Christ, which is guided by the Spirit and wisdom of God, taught and required by him so to act towards the hard and seared conscience, as it is towards the tender and weak conscience? Is the hard and seared conscience, which hath forsaken the true light, Spirit, and power, and turned against the truth, and is in a wrong stiff, wilful, hardened liberty and subtilty, to be left to its liberty, and to that spirit which draweth it out and hardeneth it in a wrong liberty? Can there be any unity, in the light and in the Spirit, had with those who are erred from the light and from the Spirit, and are deceived in their own hearts concerning it, and do but only pretend to it? Can they walk sweetly and harmoniously together in differing practices, who differ also in the ground, and are not one in the foundation, even in the true light and Spirit of the Lord? Ought not the church to judge this spirit, with its liberty and evil conscience (for that spirit will make the consciences of all that let it in, evil), as well as, to the utmost, to cherish the liberty of the tender consciences in and to the Lord? Read and consider these scriptures following, *Tit. i. 15. 1 Tim. i. 19. and iv. 2.*

The next Citation.

AND this I can truly say concerning myself, I never found my spirit forward to draw any, either to any thing I believed to be true, or to any practice or way of worship I observed or walked in; but desired that the power and leadings of life might go before them, and I was afraid lest men should receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's. He hath written in the margent of the book he sent me, *Oh! what a tender spirit was here!* intimating as if it were not so with me now.

Confirm. Blessed be the Lord, it was so with me formerly, and is so with me daily more and more; for as I wait on the Lord in his truth, which makes tender; so upon this occasion, being forced to it, I cannot but confess, that I witness the Lord daily more and more uniting my spirit to him in his truth; and as truth increaseth, so the tenderness which comes from it still increaseth in me, and I do not (nay, I may say cannot, the contrary is so written on my heart) so much as desire to drive any to what practice or way of worship I believe to be true, and am taught of God to observe; but this is the longing of my soul, that the power and leadings of life may go before them; and I daily behave myself as one that is afraid, lest men should receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's.

Quest. Yet, where I find persons manifestly warp and turn aside from the truth, and let in a wrong thing, and testify against the truth and way of the Lord, and their hearts hardened by the subtilty of him who hath deceived them; may I not singly and faithfully testify it to them, and breathe

to the Lord for them, that they may return to the true Spirit, and to the holy testimony and practices thereof, and not condemn such, as departers from the light and truth, who abide in it, nor justify themselves as abiding in it, when they are really departed from it?

His last Citation of Words of mine is out of another Book, intituled, *An Answer to the common Objection, &c.* p. 8. The Words are these:

THAT power therefore in the Church which spares the hypocrites (who can easily comply with an outward conformity in worship, without feeling an inward life and virtue) but lights heavy on that which is tender and shy in matters of worship, that is not the true church-power, but at best but a counterfeit of the true.

Confirm. The power which Christ hath given his church is not to spare hypocrites, who may easily comply with an outward uniformity in worship, without feeling an inward life and virtue. And such are not spared, but smote at, by the Spirit and power of God among us very often. And oh! that there were no hypocrites and formal spirits among us; but that all that profess the truth were in the truth; and subject to it, and did live the life of it! Nor doth the true church-power light heavy on that which is tender and shy in matters of worship; but the ministry of the true church is to the conscience, as in God's sight, and is very tender of it, as before him, to whom it is to give an account of the spiritual power it hath received from him, and of the exercise of it. That power therefore which spares the hypocrites, and lights heavy on that which is tender and shy in matters of worship, to be sure is not the true church-power, but at best but a counterfeit of the true.

Quest. But that power in the church which doth not spare hypocrites, but is very gentle and tender to all tender consciences, is not that the true church power? And who is the hypocrite? Is not he that pretendeth to the light, when he is departed from it, an hypocrite? And he which setteth up that which he calls light in himself, and denieth that which is indeed true light, and which issueth forth from God's Holy Spirit in his church, is not he an hypocrite? And hath not the church power to judge all his false pretences, and to try his spirit by the true light and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, which is still present with the true church? If the Spirit of Christ be indeed present with his church, surely it cannot but have power and authority to try, judge, and condemn every thing that is of a contrary spirit and nature, in all false pretenders whatsoever; who by their pretences to the true light, cannot shelter that which is indeed contrary to it from the holy and righteous judgment of the Spirit and power of God in his church.

Thus

Thus I have gone over these several citations of John Pennymans, and punctually set them down as he had cited them, and spoken more words to the confirmation of them, to manifest to others, as I find it plainly with me before the Lord, that I am fully the same at this day, in the sense and belief of my heart, as I was then; believing the same truth, and as ready to hold it forth, if the Lord at any time shall call me unto it, as I was then. But I was not then against true church government; nor did intend this to encourage any man to shelter himself, by a pretence to the light in himself, against true church-government; assuredly knowing that the Spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets; and that he that is truly subject to the light and Spirit of God in his own heart, will be taught thereby to be subject to it also in others. For the life, Spirit, and power of God doth not rise in vain in any; and he that hath the true ear open, will hear its voice in whomsoever it speaks; and he that doth not hear its voice, when it speaks through any to him, doth not hear with the circumcised ear, nor understand with the circumcised heart. So that John Pennyman, in citing these my words, as if in so writing I was against the true church-government, or setting up the government of any particular man (upon any pretence whatsoever) above the sense, understanding, and judgment of the true church, does me great wrong, even before the Lord, who knoweth that it was otherwise with me in that day; and he greatly wrongeth my words, which did not signify any such thing: for in the very same book, and in some of the pages which he quotes, there is expressed a sense of, and a testimony to, the true church-government, which I am assured the Spirit of the Lord will give forth, and lead his into, as the necessities and occasions of the church require. For as the Lord is not wanting to the particular, so will he not be wanting to the general: but he is faithful, who hath promised to be with his church and people, who wait upon him, and look up to him for the light and judgment of his Spirit in things wherein he engageth them, and which require their single discerning and judgment in.

To manifest, therefore, from this very book, what my belief was, and how hearty I was to church-government, and sensible of the necessity and usefulness of it, I shall recite some passages out of it.

First, I shall mention the title of that part of my book, which had John Pennyman expressed fully, as it is in the title-page, is thus: *Whereunto somewhat is added about the authority and government which Christ excluded out of his church; which occasioneth somewhat concerning the true church-government.*

This might have poised people's spirits in the reading of his Citations, from judging me to direct men to the setting up of any thing in their minds and consciences which they may call light, in opposition to the light and Spirit of God in his church, or to set up a private judgment in themselves, above the light and judgment of God's Spirit in the church. For as the church is to be tender of every member, so every member is to be tender
and

and regardful towards the church, and of the power and authority which God hath given it.

The next Passage that is on me to mention, is p. 76.

There is nothing to hurt in the mountain of God's holiness; but there is a righteous scepter, a sweet scepter, a spiritual scepter, which reacheth the spirit in the power of life, but toucheth not the outward man. To which I may add, The power of the church is not to hurt the outward man; nay, nor the soul neither: but is for the destruction of the flesh, that the soul may be saved. And when the church hath testified against their practices, or denied their spirit, it leaves them to the Lord; yet still praying to him that repentance may be given them, and mercy shewn them by him, whose mercy endures for ever.

Another Passage in p. 77.

Let the life in every one rise over it (speaking of the proud aspiring spirit) and trample upon it: and afterwards, that in thee may arise which is fit to teach, yea, and to rule in the Lord, &c.

P. 78. The example of Christ is urged, who did not exercise a wrong authority over his disciples, though he was their Lord and Master, which signified both greatness above them, and authority over them, see line 15. *Yet Christ took not upon him this kind of greatness, nor did exercise this kind of authority; but he was a servant, &c.* and did minister.

So that there was one kind of greatness and authority which Christ did not exercise, and which his church also is not to meddle with: but there was another kind of authority which he had, and which he, who hath all power in heaven and earth, giveth to his church, to partake with him in, and to act in his name.

But why should I mention any such small touches at the thing, when it is directly spoken to in a *Question* propounded, and the *Answer* thereto, p. 79, 80. &c.? I shall therefore set down the *Question*, and part of the *Answer* thereto; the whole being too long to be here inserted.

Quest. But is there to be no greatness, no authority, among the disciples of Jesus, or in the Church of Christ? Is every one to do what he will, to be subject to his own fancies and imaginations, to the inventions of his own corrupt heart? What a confused building will this be? Surely this will not long remain a Sion, but soon become a Babylon, even a heap of disorder and confusion.

Ans. There is to be no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority; yet there is both a greatness and authority suitable to the state of disciples; suitable

suitable to that kind of kingdom whereof they are. There are laws, there are governments, there are governors, there is a ruling, and there is a subjection; but all in the Spirit, all suitable to that which is to be governed; but no government of, or according to, the flesh. As Christ's kingdom is not of this world, so the government of his church and people is not according to the world: but as that which gathers is his Spirit, and that which is gathered is spiritual, so that which is governed is the spirits of his people, and they are to be governed by his Spirit, and spiritually, and not after a fleshly manner. Thus Christ himself, though he ministered to his disciples, yet he also was their Lord and Master, and in the Spirit and life of the Father ruled over them; and thus the apostles, and other ministers of Christ, had likewise in the Spirit the care of the churches, and authority in the Lord by his Spirit to govern the spirits of his people: not to govern after a fleshly manner, by their own wills, nor to prescribe to them in a lordly way, either what they should believe or practise; but in the light and in the power of the Spirit, to make their way into every one's conscience in the sight of God, ministering to every one in the Spirit according to their capacity and growth, and waiting patiently for God to convey the food and nourishment, and to build their spirits up in the faith thereby.

The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets. Here is the government; here is the law of rule and subjection in the life. Every one feeling a measure of the Spirit in himself, is thereby taught to own and subject to a greater measure of the same Spirit in another. He that hath no measure of the Spirit of God, he is not of God, he is none of Christ's: and he that hath received a measure of the Spirit, in the same Spirit feels another's measure, and owneth it in its place and service, and knoweth its moving, and cannot quench it, but giveth way to it with joy and delight. When the Spirit moves in any one to speak, the same Spirit moves in the other to be subject and give way: and so every one keeping to his own measure in the Spirit, here can be no disorder, but true subjection of every spirit: and where this is wanting, it cannot be supplied by any outward rule or order set up in the church by common consent; for that is fleshly, and lets in the flesh, and destroys the true order, rule, and subjection.

And then to limit the government aright, these two precious cautions or directions are added, pag. 85. which I am sure will answer the truth and witness of God in every conscience.

First, Care must be had that nothing govern in the church of Christ but the Spirit of Christ.

Secondly, That the Conscience be kept tender, that nothing be received but according to the light in the conscience.

There

There is likewise an *Objection* answered about *Uniformity*, p. 87, 88. which not being very large, and tending further to open the sense of my heart in this thing, I shall also here annex.

Object. But is not uniformity lovely; and doth not the apostle exhort Christians to be of one mind; and were it not a sweet thing if we were all of one heart, and one way?

Ans. Yea, uniformity is very lovely, and to be desired and waited for, as the Spirit of the Lord, which is one, leads and draws into one. But for the fleshly part (the wise reasoning part of man) by fleshly ways and means to strive to bring about a fleshly uniformity, which insnares and overbears the tender conscience, this is not lovely, nor spiritual, nor Christian. And the apostle who exhorts Christians to one mind, yet doth not bid them force one another into one mind, but walk together sweetly so far as they had attained; and wherein they were otherwise minded, God in his due time would reveal more to them, *Phil. iii. 15, 16.* He that hath, to him shall be given. And the intent and work of the ministry (with the several ministrations of it) is to bring into the unity (*Ephes. iv. 13.*) as persons are able to follow, and not to force all men into one practice or way; that is the way to destroy the faith, and the true unity, and at best can introduce but a fleshly appearance of unity in such a form of worship and godliness as eats out the power. And for being of one heart, and one way, blessed be the Lord, this is in measure known and witnessed. The way is one; Christ the truth of God; and he that is in the faith, and in the obedience to that light which shines from his Spirit into the heart of every believer, hath a taste of the one heart, and of the one way; and knoweth that no variety of practices (which is of God) can make a breach in the true unity. This is the one way, for every one to be subject to that light of Christ's Spirit which he hath received from Christ; and every one keeping here, there is also one heart kept in the midst of all the variety and diversity of practices. And the unity being thus kept, all will come into one outwardly also at length, as the light grows in every one, and as every one grows into the light: but this must be patiently waited for from the hand of God (who hath the right way of effecting it, and who alone can do it) and not harshly and cruelly attempted by the rough hand of man.

Now I desire all that would not injure and wrong another (in taking part of one's sense and mind, and concealing the other) to observe how serious my heart is in the sight of the Lord concerning church-government, and unity and uniformity among the people of the Lord, in the Spirit and power of the Lord, as the Lord shall please rightly and orderly to bring it forth, and not otherwise. And my words so plainly signifying, and holding
forth

forth this, Oh! how will J. Pennyman answer it to the great God, for thus misrepresenting me, and striving to make my words signify that which they never did, and as a proof how contrary our doctrine was then, to what it hath been of late years; whereas, in that very book he cites, my words are full concerning church-government, the authority of the church, and the duty of subjection to it in the life, as was before recited.

I have been in a great travail of spirit for J. Pennyman, the Lord having shewed me his spirit and state (as he hath also done to many others, who abide in this pure holy light which he hath forsaken, and is departed from); and this hath been the cry of my heart to the God and Father of my life for him, in great brokenness and tears, many times; *Father, forgive him, for he knows not what he does. He knows not what Spirit and power he acts against, nor what Spirit and power it is that leads him. Oh! that he might see it, and turn from it, and live! And oh! that all that err, and are mistaken in judgment, might have a sense of that which is truth indeed, and of that which is darkness indeed in their own hearts; and might not put darkness for light, and light for darkness, as too many now do, to the great hurt of their own souls, and the hardening of others against God's precious way and truth, which will be bitterness in the latter end unto all such!*

THREE OR FOUR
C O N S I D E R A T I O N S
 ADDED, CONCERNING
CHURCH-GOVERNMENT.

First, **T**HAT it is the holy will and pleasure of the great God that his church should be governed by his Holy Spirit and power revealed in it. God is the God of order, and not of confusion, and he would have every thing in the right and holy order every where, especially in his church. He hath given a measure of his good Spirit to every man, and he would have every man governed thereby: and he hath given more of his good Spirit and holy power to his church than to any particular, and he would have his church governed thereby. Read the epistles of Christ to the churches in the second and third chapters of the *Revelations*, and see how government and care over their members is expected from them. A church is a gathering in the name, power, and authority of the Most High; and Christ, to whom God gave all power in heaven and earth, is in them, and with them. God knows they can do nothing without his power; and he is faithful who hath appointed them to meet together in his name, and he will not fail them. How hath this been experienced in former days! And how has this been experienced in this our day, blessed be the name of our God! The life that springs in the church, the light that shines in the church, the power and presence of the Lord that is revealed in his church, oh! how glorious is it! God hath not gathered nor preserved a people through so many trials, nor so exercised and built them up in his pure fear, Holy Spirit, and living truth, to leave them so suddenly, and cast them off, as some men vainly imagine; but as the Lord hath thrown down that which shall never be built up more, so the Lord hath built up that which shall ne-

ver

ver be thrown down more, and brought many of his people to a settled state, in the unchangeable truth and power.

Secondly, It is the great work of Satan, and the great interest of Satan, to oppose the holy order and government of the Spirit of Christ in his church. It is that power which threw down his kingdom, and that power will keep his kingdom down; yea, the more that authority and power is established in the church, the more he is seen through, and his strength and subtilty avail nothing before the wisdom and power of God revealed in his church. And this we have observed, and may observe, in this our day, the judgment of the church, the life in the church, the light that hath stayed with the church and holy gathering, while particulars sometimes have been mistaken, and erred about the light in themselves, hath been a stay to those that have hearkened to her voice, and a means to help to recover those, who through the strength of the temptation, and their too confident leaning to that which they took for the light within, and not consulting with those whom God had ordained to be an help to the weak, and had a clearer eye-sight and understanding in the truth than themselves; I say, the light that hath stayed with the church, hath been a help to recover such who have mistaken in judgment, and erred from the light in their own particulars.

Thirdly, There is great benefit and safety to every particular in the holy order and government which God hath ordained in his church. God knoweth it is not fit for believers or his gathered-ones to be alone, and therefore he hath appointed, that by the same power and Spirit which gathered them, they should be added to the church which he hath already gathered. And then they are in the place where God takes care of them; where the Lord God appears; where the Lord God dwells. For as he dwelt outwardly in the national church of the Jews, so he dwells inwardly in the spiritual church, and gathering of believers. There life is in its unity and strength; there light shines as in its proper place; there the Shepherd is who keeps the sheep from erring; there the leading power, the preserving power, the ordering power, is daily waited for, and experienced in its brightness and clearness. *Woe is to him that is alone*; but blessings are upon him who is in unity with God's holy gathered people, and is in the sense of, and under the guidance of, that Spirit which is continually present with them. And as we have witnessed blessings in our first gathering, as we were gathered and joined to the light, Spirit, and power of the holy God in our own particulars, so we have witnessed blessings in our unity with the life in the body. Oh! how every motion of life is felt there! How the wisdom and power of God is revealed there! What help is administered to every member there! How is the knitting in the life, and the flowing of the life and holy power from vessel to vessel, daily experienced there! So that every one is quickened with the pure life; every one seasoned with the pure salt; every virgin anointed with the holy ointment; every one leavened

with the leaven which unleavens to sin and Satan, and leavens to God. Indeed my soul daily blesteth the Lord, not only that he hath visited me, but brought me into the holy living society; and that daily the Lord vouchsafeth to give me to partake of their life and Spirit, in which life and Spirit I have unity with them, and love them, and honour them, and not out of it. Oh! praises, and everlasting honour, and renown to the Lord my God, who hath remembered me with the favour he bears to his people, and hath so visited me with his salvation, that he hath given me to see the good of his chosen, and caused my poor, desolate, mourning soul to rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and to glory in him with his inheritance. Glorious things were spoken of the church under the law; a glorious power and presence was with that outward people, under that outward covenant; but this was but a shadow of the glory that was to be revealed in the church of the new covenant, and of the presence and power of the living God, that was to be manifested and dwell there. And indeed it is manifested, indeed it doth dwell there, and those that are the begotten, and born, and preserved by God's Holy Spirit, and power of the immortal Word of life, daily witness it.

Fourthly, The glory and beauty of the New-Testament-church doth in no small degree consist in the holy order and government of them, as a spiritual living body, by the blessed Spirit and power of the Lord.

There were four things wherein the glory of the church of the Jews under the covenant did much consist.

The *first* was, in the salvation wherewith God visited them, and which he bestowed upon them. *Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like to thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency. And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high-places,* Deut. xxxiii. 29.

Secondly, In the gifts God bestowed upon them; for God did adorn and beautify that people with the good things which he bestowed upon them, *Ezek. xvi. 14.*

Thirdly, In the presence of the Lord their God in the midst of them, the ark of whose presence was with them, and whose dwelling-place was among them, and who was nigh unto them to be enquired of by them, and to answer and supply them with all that they wanted and called upon him for, *Deut. iv. 7.*

Fourthly, In the holy statutes and righteous judgments which God gave them to be ordered and governed by, as his chosen people, *ver. 5, 6, and 8.*

Now all these are much more fulfilled in the New-Testament-church; for,

First,

First, There is the salvation witnessed, which this outward salvation of this outward people was but a figure of. There the everlasting arm of God's power is revealed in an inward and spiritual way and manner; to destroy the enemies of a man's own house, to redeem from Satan, to cut Rahab, to wound the dragon inwardly, and to defend his gathered people from the inroads of his strength, and from the subtilty of his temptations.

Secondly, The Lord doth give great gifts to his churches; he blesseth them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. Mark the diversity of gifts, and diversity of manifestations, which God gave to his churches in the apostles days, *1 Cor. xii. 4, &c.*

Thirdly, There was God's presence revealed; there Christ was in the midst, whenever they were gathered together in his name. Every church (as well as that of the Ephesians) was built up together an habitation of God through the Spirit, *Ephes. ii. 22.* Yea, Christ was head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all, *Chap. i. 22, 23.* Yea, they were, and are, the temple of the living God, in which God would dwell and walk, and be their God, and they his people, *2 Cor. vi. 16.*

Fourthly, The holy order of his own Spirit and life God will not fail to reveal unto them, that they may walk in the Spirit of the gospel, in the power of the gospel, in the order of the gospel, and the holy government of God's Spirit and power may shine in the midst of them, and that God may bless them as an habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness, *Jer. xxi. 23.*

The church is a body; every particular soul that is renewed, quickened, and kept alive, is a member. Now every member needs the presence and power of that Spirit which quickened it, to nourish, keep alive, and order it. And the church hath much more need of the Spirit to be present with it, to guide and order it, and keep it in the holy order, power, and government of life. And this order and holy government in the Spirit and power of the Lord was brought forth in the apostles days: for the apostles did rejoice in it concerning that church of Colosse, who joyed beholding their order, and the stedfastness of their faith in Christ, *Coloss. ii. 5.* For the apostles and ministers of Christ did set things in order in that day, *Tit. i. 5. 1 Cor. xi. 34.* and it was their joy to see that order observed, and their grief when they were unruly, and would not be subject to the holy order and government of the church, *1 Thess. v. 14. Tit. i. 10.* And the church of Corinth, though it fell short in no gift, yet falling short in order, it did not arrive at the glory of some other churches.

The spiritual Solomon, who is full of the wisdom of God, oh! the blessed order and holy government that he brings forth among his church and people! How doth God establish Jerusalem, and make her a praise in the earth, but by the holy order and blessed government of his Spirit, governing her as a church, as a spiritual body, by his own pure wisdom, which no other government or order can come near? And truly my heart hath been

been often affected and filled with a ravishing joy, when I have beheld the heavenly and blessed order and government which the Lord God of wisdom hath already brought forth among us, and guideth us in, to the comfort and refreshment of many, and to the injury and hurt of none, neither without nor within. And indeed we do not desire any greatness or authority of man; but only of the Lord our God in the midst of us, that all men may be but his servants and ministers in the church, and to the church, for the good of the church. No, no; this is the day of the Lord, of the setting up and exalting of his power in the church, which the church waiteth for, and knoweth the appearance of, and cannot bear the exaltation of man (of man's spirit, wisdom, power, and authority) instead of the Lord's. Yet nothing that cometh from the Lord, from his pure life and Spirit in any, must be rejected: and if the Lord please to make use of those whom he did make use of to gather home to himself; I say, if he hath given them gifts, and please to make use of them also in building up, and manifesting the holy order of his Holy Spirit and power, the Lord must not be resisted or withstood therein; but whatever comes from him must be received with thankfulness, through what instrument soever he please to convey it.

Object. But have I not been taught to be subject to the light in my own heart, and to make that my judge? And is not this another, or new, or different doctrine from that, now to tell me I must be subject to the light of God's Spirit in his church? Suppose that which the church requires, or orders, or holds forth, be different from my light, or be not yet revealed to me by the light wherewith God hath enlightened me, must I deny the light wherewith God hath enlightened me, and be subject to the church's light? Or must I practise as the church orders, before I have light and faith in my own particular?

Answer. I shall answer this question according to the naked and plain sense of truth in my heart.

First, God gives power to his church to perform all that he requires of her as a church. Now the church is a spiritual body, and is to take care of her members, to look after them that they mind the truth, and walk according to truth, and to admonish and reprove them when they do otherwise. And every member of the church ought to hear the church, in whatever she speaks unto it from God.

Secondly, Every member hath need of the light, Spirit, and power which God gives his church, and reveals in his church, for the good of the body, and the benefit and advantage of each member therein.

Thirdly, The light, Spirit and power in the church is never contrary to the light, Spirit, and power in any member; but always one with it, and a cherisher and preserver of what God begets, and which answers his witness in any. The new Jerusalem, the church of God's building in his own Spirit and power, is a city at unity with itself. The greatest degree of light owns, and is at unity with, the least; and the least degree of light hath a sense of that which is in degree and measure above it.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The light in the weakest, which they are at first to be turned, and afterwards to be kept to, though there is a sufficiency in it for the particular, yet they are not so understanding and sensible of it as those whose senses have been long exercised in the living truth, and are grown in the holy experience. Therefore as the elders are to be tender of the younger, so the younger are to reverence the elders in the Lord, and not to slight their testimony, experience, or judgment in the truth. When we were first convinced of the truth, were we not in a great degree ignorant and doubtful concerning the risings and motions of it in the heart, which the eye being yet weak, could not clearly distinguish? And oh! how helpful to us was the tender care and advice of such whom God had made acquainted with those things, and were able to give us true judgment from him, in such cases as our weak minds were apt to be entangled about, and could not see through?

Fifthly, Great sobriety is needful in such cases, wherein men are too prone to be judging others, especially the church of God. Every man is to take heed of thinking of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God had dealt to every man the measure of faith, *Rom. xii. 3*. And the young men (who have not the experience of the aged, and are most apt to confidence and excursions) are in a special manner to be exhorted to be sober-minded, *Ti. ii. 6*. Men may easily judge that others err, and that they themselves keep to the light and measure of truth in their own particulars; but it is hard to do it. But they that indeed do it, abide in the humility, and innocency, and lamb-like spirit, which would give no offence in any thing, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the church of God. If it will go so hard with him that offends one of Christ's little-ones, how will it go with him that offends his church, wherein his glory and power riseth, and is established? The church is not apt to be such an erring body from the light, Spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, as many (who mistake concerning the light in their own particulars) are too apt to suppose.

Lastly, Ever since the fall of man, man hath been secretly, or more manifestly, directed by a light, or the principle within, to direct or guide his ways. To Adam the holy seed was promised, which was not only to appear outwardly in a body of flesh, but also within in man's heart, to bruise the serpent's head there. And the holy patriarchs had not the letter outwardly, but God's Spirit inwardly to be their guide and teacher, which did also strive with the wicked old world before the flood. The Jews also were directed to the Word nigh in the mouth and heart; and this Word shewed also to the Gentiles what was good, and what the Lord required of them; and by this Word such of the Gentiles as hearkened to it felt somewhat of the new creation, and of the new nature, by which nature they did in measure answer the holy law of God, and do the things contained in the law, which by the old corrupt nature no man can do. Also Christ preached the king-

dom,

dom, or seed of the kingdom within. And the apostles preached the same word of faith within, which Moses had testified of.

Yet in none of these dispensations was any testimony from God to be despised; but his voice to be heard in the prophets, in Christ, and in the apostles. And though men are blessedly and gloriously turned, and to be turned to the light within, in these our days; yet they are not thereby taught to neglect or despise the voice of God, in any whom he sends and speaks by, and pretend it is contrary to their light; but to lie low before the Lord, that in the true humility and holy fear, they may know the voice of the Shepherd, both in their own hearts, and in whomsoever he pleaseth to speak. For the Great Almighty God is not limited, but he may speak in and thro' whom he pleaseth. He may speak to me from the anointing in my own heart, and the holy anointing may please to speak to me through others; and so far as I am of God, and sensible of his appearance, I cannot despise the voice of the anointing in my own heart, or through others. Yea, truth teacheth that modesty, temperance, humility, tenderness, and sobriety, that I dare not despise the voice that pretends to the anointing in any, until I have made trial of it. Yea, John Pennyman's voice and testimony I durst not condemn, until the Lord my God, in the unerring light and pure springing life, manifested unto me that it was not of him, but of the transforming enemy, who had bewitched and deceived him by his strong delusions (he forsaking the rock, which would have been his strength), to receive and believe a lie, instead of the truth.

Oh! blessed be the Lord for the building up such a church, and speaking to us through his church! And happy are they that hear her voice, and so keep to their own, as to know the voice of their own in the church, and are not through temptation prejudiced against it. For it is the Lord's gathering, and the Lord is with it; and the people who have been gathered by the Lord, and are daily taught by him, keep with him. And tho' some may depart from us, and through error of judgment testify against us, yet truth abides, and the Lord's people abide with the truth, and his building goeth on, and the holy government of his Son encreaseth in it, and the Lord appears more and more inwardly in his glory, as the hearts of his people are made capable to receive it from him. And in all the goings out of any, and apostasies that have been in any, through hearkening to a wrong spirit, they that have heard and revered the voice and testimony of the church, and God's chosen and blessed ministry, which he hath raised among us, have still been preserved; and they that have gone therefrom, been betrayed. And it is my faith, this church of God's gathering shall still be preserved, and grow in the holy dominion and authority of God's blessed Spirit; and that all her enemies shall be found liars unto her, and she shall tread upon their high places, and shall grow and prosper the more by all opposition; the everlasting arm and wisdom of the Almighty being with her, to preserve, prosper, and bless her, so be it. *Amen.*

T H E

[THE]

SEED of GOD,

AND OF HIS

KINGDOM,

Treated and Testified of

According to the **SCRIPTURES of TRUTH,**

True Experience felt in the **HEART from the GOD**
of **TRUTH.**

By **ISAAC PENNINGTON**

The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, &c. MATT. xiii. 31, 32.
Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. I PET. i. 23.
Whoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. I JOHN. iii. 9.

VOL. II.

G G G G

the voice, bidding thee from every false way (which is not
 truth, and where the soul's rest is not) and directing thee to the true way
 of the way of holiness, livingly coming out and every to need. This
 the way, walk in it. This is the way of life, this is the way of truth.

THE
 PRELACE.

I WOULD fain have (and my soul exceedingly breathes to the Lord for
 it) disputing about religion come to an end, and the right understand-
 ing, practising, and experiencing the true religion begun and go on in mens
 hearts. The gospel-religion, in the apostles days, did begin in the evidence
 and demonstration of God's Spirit inwardly; and it cannot rightly begin
 any otherwise now. Nor can it rightly go on any other way, but according
 to its beginning: for they that begin in the Spirit, cannot possibly rightly
 go on, or be made perfect, by the flesh. Did the apostles in vain wait for
 the Spirit and power from on high? Can the Gospel-ministry, or gospel-
 work in any heart, be carried on without it? Or did they in vain turn men
 from Satan's power to God? Can the least true change be wrought in the
 heart, without the operation of God's Holy Spirit and power there? And to
 be turned to wait for, and taught to know, the risings of the pure power of
 the Lord inwardly (which is so necessary to begin, preserve, and carry on
 the work), oh! what a precious ministration of life, and of the gospel,
 is this from the Lord? The thing that we wanted, and mourned after all
 our days, in our several strains and ways of profession, without the know-
 ledge of this, is now met with; blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who
 hath cast up and prepared the way (according to his promise) before the
 face of all people. Whoever hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith to
 the churches of his own gathering, or from the angel of his own sending,
 may now hear the blessed tidings of the reign of the King of Israel, and
 of Sion his holy hill, and Jerusalem his holy city; and how to wait for the
 law going out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and how
 he may receive the sheep's nature, and the sheep's ear, which hears the voice
 of the Shepherd, and is not deceived about it. Oh! come out of the vain
 disputing mind, and thou comest out of deceit! Come into the true silence
 and stilling of the fleshly part thither, where God's voice is heard and un-
 derstood; and thou comest into true certainty. There thou comest to hear
 the

the voice behind thee, calling thee from every false way (which is polluted, and where thy soul's rest is not) and directing thee to the true way, to the way of holiness, livingly pointing out and saying to thee, "This is the way, walk in it." This is the way of life, this is the way of truth, this is the way of peace, this is the way of holiness; here all the true travellers are to walk, with their faces Sion-wards, to obtain the kingdom and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, Oh! every one that truly thirsts, why do ye not come to the waters? God hath opened the way, he heartily invites you; yea, the Spirit and the bride say come, and take the waters of life freely. Oh! wait to know the inward holy power, and the inward birth, and the inward teaching, and the inward covenant, and this birth's overcoming, by the inward power, the inward enemies; that ye being delivered from them, may come to enjoy the well of life, and to sit down in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, where the true rest is; and in the strength, life, and virtue of his Spirit, may serve the Lord in righteousness and holiness; without fear of those enemies which the Lord hath delivered you from, and which his love, mercy, and power, is as a wing over you to preserve you for ever from; I say, that ye may serve the Lord your God out of the fear of these, and feed on his holy mountain, out of the reach of those, in the majesty of the name of the Lord your God, and these may not be able to make you afraid, or disturb your rest, or hinder your sweet enjoyment and precious service of your God any more! Oh! ye that are afraid of being deceived, take heed ye be not deceived inwardly in your hearts, about these things; and by the veil which the enemy spreads there, hindered and deprived of your share in the blessed administration of the Spirit, life, and power of our Lord Jesus; whom to know after the flesh (or as man can comprehend concerning him in his carnal mind) is of little value; but to know him inwardly and spiritually, to live and reign, and to exercise his dominion in the heart over every temptation, and over all that is contrary to God (whenever any such thing appears) is a pure, living, excellent, and satisfactory knowledge of him; which the Lord lead every truly-hungering and thirsting soul towards the obtaining and full enjoyment of! Amen.

the word of God is the seed of the kingdom of God, which is the light and life, of the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ, whereof in him is the fulness. It is an heavenly talent, or manifestation of his Spirit in the heart, which is given to man for him, in the virtue and strength of Christ, to improve for God. This which God hath placed in man, to witness for himself, and to guide man from evil unto good (in the pure breathings, quickenings, and shinings of it) this is the seed, which is freely bestowed on man, to spring up and remain in him, and to gather him out of himself, into itself.

Secondly, *Who is the sower of this seed?*

Ans. God, in and through Christ. He is the good husbandman. He, by the word which created all in the beginning, creates a-new in Christ Jesus, renews his workmanship in man, and puts a measure of this word or Spirit of life in man's heart, whereby he renews him; and they that are thus renewed by him, are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Thirdly, *Where is this seed to be found?*

Ans. The seed of God is the word of God; the seed of the kingdom is the word of the kingdom. It is a measure of the light and life, of the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ, whereof in him is the fulness. It is an heavenly talent, or manifestation of his Spirit in the heart, which is given to man for him, in the virtue and strength of Christ, to improve for God. This which God hath placed in man, to witness for himself, and to guide man from evil unto good (in the pure breathings, quickenings, and shinings of it) this is the seed, which is freely bestowed on man, to spring up and remain in him, and to gather him out of himself, into itself.

What it is: Where it is to be found: Who sowed it there: What is hid or wrapped up in it: What is its Nature: What its Effects: Of its Growth, and Hindrances thereof: Of its Blessedness, and how it makes Blessed? How CHRIST is formed of this Seed; and how the Soul is Born of this Immortal Seed.

SEED of the KINGDOM:

What it is: Where it is to be found: Who sowed it there: What is hid or wrapped up in it: What is its Nature: What its Effects: Of its Growth, and Hindrances thereof: Of its Blessedness, and how it makes Blessed? How CHRIST is formed of this Seed; and how the Soul is Born of this Immortal Seed.

First, WHAT the seed is?

Ans. The seed of God is the word of God; the seed of the kingdom is the word of the kingdom. It is a measure of the light and life, of the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ, whereof in him is the fulness. It is an heavenly talent, or manifestation of his Spirit in the heart, which is given to man for him, in the virtue and strength of Christ, to improve for God. This which God hath placed in man, to witness for himself, and to guide man from evil unto good (in the pure breathings, quickenings, and shinings of it) this is the seed, which is freely bestowed on man, to spring up and remain in him, and to gather him out of himself, into itself.

Secondly, *Who is the sower of this seed?*

Ans. God, in and through Christ. He is the good husbandman. He, by the word which created all in the beginning, creates a-new in Christ Jesus, renews his workmanship in man, and puts a measure of this word or Spirit of life in man's heart, whereby he renews him; and they that are thus renewed by him, are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Thirdly, *Where is this seed to be found?*

Ans. The seed of God is the word of God; the seed of the kingdom is the word of the kingdom. It is a measure of the light and life, of the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ, whereof in him is the fulness. It is an heavenly talent, or manifestation of his Spirit in the heart, which is given to man for him, in the virtue and strength of Christ, to improve for God. This which God hath placed in man, to witness for himself, and to guide man from evil unto good (in the pure breathings, quickenings, and shinings of it) this is the seed, which is freely bestowed on man, to spring up and remain in him, and to gather him out of himself, into itself.

What it is: Where it is to be found: Who sowed it there: What is hid or wrapped up in it: What is its Nature: What its Effects: Of its Growth, and Hindrances thereof: Of its Blessedness, and how it makes Blessed? How CHRIST is formed of this Seed; and how the Soul is Born of this Immortal Seed.

SEED of the KINGDOM:

What it is: Where it is to be found: Who sowed it there: What is hid or wrapped up in it: What is its Nature: What its Effects: Of its Growth, and Hindrances thereof: Of its Blessedness, and how it makes Blessed? How CHRIST is formed of this Seed; and how the Soul is Born of this Immortal Seed.

First, WHAT the seed is?

Ans. The seed of God is the word of God; the seed of the kingdom is the word of the kingdom. It is a measure of the light and life, of the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ, whereof in him is the fulness. It is an heavenly talent, or manifestation of his Spirit in the heart, which is given to man for him, in the virtue and strength of Christ, to improve for God. This which God hath placed in man, to witness for himself, and to guide man from evil unto good (in the pure breathings, quickenings, and shinings of it) this is the seed, which is freely bestowed on man, to spring up and remain in him, and to gather him out of himself, into itself.

Secondly, *Who is the sower of this seed?*

Ans. God, in and through Christ. He is the good husbandman. He, by the word which created all in the beginning, creates a-new in Christ Jesus, renews his workmanship in man, and puts a measure of this word or Spirit of life in man's heart, whereby he renews him; and they that are thus renewed by him, are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Thirdly, *Where is this seed to be found?*

Ans. The seed of God is the word of God; the seed of the kingdom is the word of the kingdom. It is a measure of the light and life, of the grace and truth, which is by Jesus Christ, whereof in him is the fulness. It is an heavenly talent, or manifestation of his Spirit in the heart, which is given to man for him, in the virtue and strength of Christ, to improve for God. This which God hath placed in man, to witness for himself, and to guide man from evil unto good (in the pure breathings, quickenings, and shinings of it) this is the seed, which is freely bestowed on man, to spring up and remain in him, and to gather him out of himself, into itself.

Answ. Where God sows it, which is in the inward earth. It is an inward seed, and it is sowed in inward land or earth; that is, in the hearts of men. There the light of the word shines, there the life of the word is felt, stirring secretly in and quickening those that were dead in trespasses and sins. There the voice and call of the word is heard, calling from unrighteousness and sin, to righteousness and holiness.

Fourthly, *In what sorts of earth is this heavenly seed sown?*

Answ. In all sorts; in thorny ground, stony ground, highway ground, and good ground. God's inward lightnings enlighten the inward world throughout; so that God hath not left any man without a witness in his conscience against sin. So that, though man's conscience be corrupt, and his light become darkness, yet God's witness in his conscience can never be corrupted; but whenever it witnesseth there, it witnesseth the truth for God, and against man, and the corruption and searedness of his heart and conscience.

Fifthly, *In what sort of earth it brings forth good fruit to perfection.*

Answ. Only in the good ground. It brings forth fruit in other grounds, and the fruit it brings forth is good. The convictions are good, the desires begotten there by it, and that arise from it, are good. The leaving off of some bad things, and doing some good things, is good; but the thorns, the cares, the worldliness, the fear of persecution, that spring up from another root, and are of another nature, choak the good which the seed brings forth in the thorny ground, and stifle and choak the seed itself also, in such kind of grounds. But in the good ground which yields its whole nourishment to the good seed, and will not yield nourishment to any bad; the good seed not only springs up, but brings forth fruit to perfection.

Sixthly, *How may the ground that is bad be made good? Was not the ground which is now good, once bad; and may not the ground which is now bad, be made good?*

Answ. God hath shut up all men in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. The heart that is now soft, was once hard. The heart that is now believing, was once in the unbelief. The heart that now loves God, was once in the enmity. The plough of God, put into the thorny ground, tearing it up, and rooting out the thorns thereof, will change its nature, and make it become better.

Break up your fallow ground; sow not among thorns; said God to his Israel of old. And the stony ground, if the stones be picked out of it, will be less stony; yea, not at all stony, if all the stones be picked out. And the highway ground, being inclosed, and dressed by God's Spirit and power, will be no longer common or highway ground. Doth not man, by care, art, and industry, change the nature of outward land or ground? Surely then the Lord, by the word of his power, by his inward destroying of evil, and creating good anew, can change the nature of ground inwardly.

Now

Now for the clearer and plainer signifying of what yet remains on my heart, concerning this precious seed of life, or seed of the kingdom of God; I shall distribute it under these three heads; under which the things mentioned in the foregoing title will be comprized.

I. What is hid or wrapped up in this seed.

II. The nature of it.

III. The effects of it.

I.

What is hid or wrapped up in this precious heavenly Seed.

Ans. **I**NDEED there is so much wrapped up in it, as the heart of man cannot conceive, much less the tongue utter; yet somewhat have I felt, and somewhat is upon my heart, to say in answer to this thing, under these four heads following.

First, The glory of the kingdom of heaven, the glory of the everlasting kingdom, is hid and wrapped up in it as in a seed. Whatever Christ appears, reigns, and shines in, is there as in a seed. Oh! the shootings forth, and spreadings abroad of it, are indeed glorious and excellent! How can a man almost speak concerning it! the thing itself (being inwardly felt, known, and enjoyed) is so far beyond all words! What doth the kingdom of God stand in? It stands not in word, but in power. The power is hid and wrapped up in this seed. The pure power of life is in this seed. The sword that pierceth Leviathan, that woundeth the Serpent's head, that cutteth Rahab and the dragon, is in this seed. Doth the kingdom of God consist in righteousness, peace, and joy in God's Spirit? This is all in this seed, and is partaken of and enjoyed, as this seed springs up, and gains authority and dominion in the heart. Yea, the horn of God's anointed, the righteous and peaceable scepter of the Saviour, is known and exalted in this seed, as it springs up, and spreads abroad in the life and virtue of the Father.

Secondly, The divine nature of God Almighty is hid and wrapped up in it. It is the seed of God, and it is of the very nature of God; and he in whom it springs, and who is gathered into it, born of it, and one with it, partakes of the divine nature. Peter speaks of the great and precious promises, whereby the saints are made partakers of the divine nature. All the promises are to the seed of promise, to Christ the Son of God, to the seed of God, to the heirs of life and salvation in Christ; and they are all fulfilled to them, and enjoyed by them, who are ingrafted into, and one with Christ the seed; which cannot be, but by the grace, by the truth, by the light, life, Spirit, and power, which he sows in the heart; which are not many things, but all contained and comprehended in the one seed.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, All the graces and virtues of God's Holy Spirit are hid and wrapped up in this one seed. There is nothing God can require of the soul, nor nothing the soul can desire of God, but is hid and wrapped up in this seed. So that all that is needful, or all that can be desired, is the growing and spreading of this seed in the soul, and the soul's gathering into it, and its living, dwelling, abiding, and acting in it. And oh! the great difference between the soul's selfish striving and willing, and running, to join to God and Christ, and to live in God and Christ; and God's joining it to himself and his Son in this seed, and its living, willing, and acting, in the springing life of this seed! To make this a little more plain and evident to the hearts of those that desire the true understanding of this thing, I shall instance in some particulars.

First, The pure, living, heavenly knowledge of the Father, and of his Son Christ Jesus, is wrapped up in this seed. God is light; and this seed, which comes from him, is not darkness, but light; and in the springing light of this seed, God and Christ are revealed. The divine nature of them springs up in the seed (and if I know their nature, I know them); yea, here we (whom the Lord hath visited, and shewn mercy to, though men despise us) know the righteous Spirit of Christ, the righteous nature of Christ, the righteous life of Christ, and feel him to be one with the Father, who begets of the same Spirit, nature, and life in us. And he that is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, and he that is united to the Lord is one Spirit; and he that is united to the seed, to the measure of grace and truth from Christ (wherein and whereby the soul is united), is united to God, and ingrafted into Christ; and as the seed is formed in him, Christ is formed in him; and as he is formed and new-created in the seed, he is the workmanship of God, formed and new-created in Christ.

Secondly, Faith, the true faith, the lively, effectual, saving, conquering faith, which gives victory over the world, and over the devil and his temptations, is contained or wrapped up in this seed. Faith is the gift of God, the precious gift of God; which is not found in man's nature, but springs and grows from the precious seed of the kingdom, which God sows in man's heart. So that it is a gift to be waited for, and obtained from God. Therefore the apostle Peter, writing to the saints in his time, directs his epistle thus, *To them who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Peter i. 1. Faith is a precious thing, a righteous thing, an holy thing, which God is the giver of, which Christ is the author and finisher of; and it springs from the holy root, from the holy seed of life and righteousness, which God sows in the heart. This faith (I speak not of man's ability of believing, or the faith which is found in man's nature) is the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1. The faith which God gives to them that are born of him, John i. 12, 13, who are born of the seed incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, 1 Peter i. 23. which word being nigh in the mouth and heart,

heart, and begetting, preserving, and increasing faith there (as is daily experienced plentifully, blessed be the Lord), is therefore called the word of faith, *Rom. x. 8.*

Thirdly, The pure fear, the holy fear, the heavenly fear, which is of a clean and heavenly nature, and endureth for ever, is also in this seed. The child-like fear is in the nature of the child; and the more it grows in the true child-like nature, the more it grows in this kindly fear, wherein there is no torment, but the pure pleasure of life, and of holy obedience to the Father of life. The child-like fear is a promise of the new covenant; and given to the children of the new covenant, by virtue of the new covenant; God putting it into their hearts from the seed of life springing up in them, which preserves them from departing from the Lord, *Jer. xxxii. 40.*

Fourthly, The pure divine love is in it. As this springs, love to God springs. As God is love, so the seed that is of him partakes of love. There is no enmity in it, nor no enmity or ill-will springs from it. This is it that makes it so natural to the children of God to love; because they are born of that seed which came from the God of love, whose nature is love. Oh! how daily is it found, by sweet and certain experience, that this seed (springing up) teacheth and enableth to love! And they that have this seed springing up in them, need not to be writ to, or outwardly taught to love with the brotherly love; for in it, and by it, and through it, they are taught of God to love one another. So that there needs nothing but the circumcising of the heart, the purifying of the heart, through the obedience of the truth, the cutting off of that fleshly mind, nature, will, and wisdom, which cannot love aright; and the pure love will spring up fully, towards the Lord, and towards the brethren, *Deut. xxx. 6.* *1 Peter i. 22.* yea, it will be natural to love all; and that command of Christ's will not be grievous; namely, to love enemies, even the greatest revilers, cursers, and persecuters, *Matt. v. 44.*

Fifthly, The pure hope, the hope of the upright, the hope which makes not ashamed, the hope which goes within the veil, and is a sure and steadfast anchor there, staying the mind upon the Lord, who keeps such in perfect peace; this hope is contained in, and springeth from, the seed. For nothing but that which comes from God (from the holy seed of truth and righteousness), can stay the mind upon God. So that he that feels the seed, feels the hope; and keeping to the seed (to the holy root) to the end, the hope remains to the end. So the mind being turned to the light, being turned from Satan's power to God, being turned to Christ, being turned to the appearance and voice of the word of life within, being turned from the seed of wickedness and darkness, to the holy and righteous seed of the kingdom, it is turned to the hope, it is turned to that which begets a true and right hope in the heart; which hopes in God's love, hopes in God's mercy, hopes in God's kind, tender, and faithful nature; and hath no confidence nor hope in the flesh, but in the holy and heavenly seed, and work of righteousness and of the kingdom; which is God's battle-axe and weapon
of

of war, whereby he brings down the flesh. This hope stays the mind in every temptation, in every distress, in every trial, in all the winds, storms, and waves of persecution that it can be assaulted with. For in this seed the root of Jesse is felt, the everlasting rock and foundation of life is felt; and here the God of hope fills his, that are gathered hither, and abide here, with all joy and peace in believing; that they may abound in hope, thro' the power of the Holy Ghost, *Rom. xv. 12, 13.*

Sixthly, The true patience, which obtains the crown, which makes perfect and entire, so that there is nothing wanting, where it hath its perfect work (*Jam. i. 4.*); the patience which enables quietly to suffer any chastisement from God, or any affliction, or hard dealing from men, it is contained in, and given with, this seed. As God is patient, and long-suffering, so this seed is also. It is man that is of the brittle, fretful, impatient nature; but he that receiveth the Word of faith, the seed of faith, in it he receiveth faith and patience also; so that to him it is not only given to believe, but to suffer also for the sake of Christ; and he that abides in the seed, and feels the seed remaining in him, and its nature prevailing, can never be impatient; whatsoever the Lord suffers to befall him.

Seventhly, The Lamb's meekness is in it. Where should the Lamb's meekness be found, but in his Father's seed, or in the seed of his Father's kingdom? Here the meek and quiet Spirit is received, witnessed, and enjoyed; which in the sight of God is of much price. This seed is sowed or begotten in the womb of the heavenly wisdom, and the meekness of wisdom, the true meekness of the true wisdom, is found in it. Here the still, soft, gentle, lamb-like nature grows up, wherein there is none of Esau's roughness.

Eighthly, Here poverty of Spirit, true poverty of Spirit, is witnessed. He is poor indeed who hath sold all, and hath nothing left him but this seed, and the appearance and help of God in this seed; which is not in his own hands, neither, but in the will and disposal of God.

Ninthly, Here mercifulness towards others is experienced; for he that is brought hither lives only by mercy, and he that lives by mercy, and is daily what he is by mercy, cannot but be merciful unto others.

Tenthly, Here the true mourning and lamenting after the Lord, and his precious life and presence, and because of the presence or power of that which hinders the growth of the seed, and the soul's union with, and enjoyment of, the Lord in it, is witnessed. For the true mourning, to which the blessedness belongs, is of God, from the living sense that ariseth from his pure seed in the heart; and blessed indeed are they that thus mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Eleventhly, The true hungering and thirsting after righteousness ariseth from this seed. It is the seed of God, the birth of God, that which hath the sense of the excellency of his righteousness, that hungers and thirsts after his righteousness.

Twelfthly, The true sobriety, moderation, and temperance ariseth from this seed; and they that are joined to the seed, and are and act in the

seed, easily learn such sobriety, moderation, and temperance, as they that are out of it cannot possibly learn.

Lastly, To name no more, the cross which mortifies and crucifies to the world and to sin, can only be taken up in the seed, or by virtue of the seed. Indeed the seed is a cross; yea, enmity to the serpent's nature, spirit, and course; and he that takes it up, its will, its nature, its law of life, takes up the cross to the other nature, will, and the law of sin and death. So that thy the holy seed, and thou hast only a shadow or appearance of the cross; but in a sense of, and subjection to the seed, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is felt, working powerfully against sin, and the whole course of the evil and sinful nature, effectually crucifying and subduing it.

Fourthly, The fourth thing which is hid or wrapped up in the precious seed, which is the last that remains to be mentioned by me at this time, is this; The new covenant, which God makes with the new Israel, by which he makes the heart new, and writes his law in it, and takes away the stony heart, and heals all their backslidings, and loves them freely, and puts his Spirit within them, causing them to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and do them; even the holy agreement of the soul with God in Christ Jesus, is in this seed.

God gave Christ for a covenant, and the seed of grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ; which is of his nature, of him the covenant; and all that receive this grace and truth from him, this holy seed of the kingdom, they receive the covenant; and they that walk in it, walk in the covenant.

Here, and here alone, the new creation in Christ Jesus is known.

Here, and here alone, the coming to God by Christ is truly understood and witnessed.

Here, and here alone, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is writ in the heart.

Keep here, thou never goest out of the holy agreement with God and with Christ; for in this grace and truth, in this seed of life, there is nothing that disagrees with them. Here thou livest in the Spirit, walkest in the Spirit, and dost not, canst not, fulfill the lusts of the flesh. There is nothing here that will either displease God, or lead thy soul aside from him; but here the Lord guides the feet of his saints, and teacheth all of them (from the least babe of them, to the highest growth), and puts his law of life and new obedience, and his holy Spirit, into their hearts, that none of their steps may slide. Here the way of holiness, wherein God preserves his from erring, *Isa. xxxv. 8.* is known and walked in. Yea, here Christ is known and felt to be the way, the truth, and the life. The sheep that are gathered hither, and come hither, are returned to the Bishop and Shepherd of their souls, who watcheth over them, and powerfully preserveth them, that they run astray no more. For whither should they go, or whom should they hear, when they have found him, and know his voice, with whom are the words of eternal life?

I shall

I shall conclude this head with that precious scripture, 1 Cor. i. 30. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* How are we of God in Christ Jesus, but by this seed of God, by being born of the Spirit of God, by being begotten out of the spirit of the world, into the nature and Spirit of Christ, from this immortal and incorruptible seed of life, truth, grace, and Spirit? And how do we put on Christ, but by putting on this seed? And how do we grow up in Christ, but by the growing up in this seed, and feeling this seed grow up in us? And here, in truth and demonstration of God's Spirit, we are formed in Christ, and Christ formed in us, as this seed groweth up into a form and shape in us, and we into a form and shape in it. Now we cannot receive this seed, but as we part with and deny our own wisdom and fleshly confidence; and denying that, and crying to God for wisdom, God brings up the wisdom of the seed in us, and makes Christ become unto us wisdom therein. And we cannot hunger after the true righteousness, the heavenly righteousness, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as we see the loathsomeness of, and put off, our own righteousness; and then becoming naked, we are taught of God to buy white raiment of him, which is the righteousness of the saints, and so he becomes our righteousness, made so of God to us.

And he is the purger and cleanser of sin and unholiness out of our hearts and lives, and the holy leavener and sanctifier of our hearts, so that we have nothing of holiness, but what we have of him and in him. And he is our redemption; our redemption is by him and through him, our redemption is wrought and preserved by him, and enjoyed in him; yea he is made of God unto us redemption. So that having him, we have redemption through his blood; yea, he is our redeemer and redemption for evermore. Alas! what is it to get notions of these things into the outward comprehension! but to feel them livingly in the heart, is life and peace for evermore; and the knowledge of this seed of the kingdom, and of God and Christ in this seed, is the most precious knowledge that can be desired, obtained, or enjoyed.

II.

The Nature of this Seed.

WHAT is the nature of the seed of God, or the seed of the kingdom? *Ans.* Though the nature of it hath been largely signified already, under the foregoing head (for the mentioning of what is wrapped up in it, abundantly sheweth its nature), yet I shall speak a little more punctually and expressly of it in several particulars, according to the scriptures, that the reader may have the more distinct sense and inward apprehension of it, the Lord opening his heart in reading these things.

First, It is of an immortal, incorruptible nature, 1 Peter i. 23. *It is a*

seed that can never die in itself, though it may be as it were dead in man; or unto man, not putting forth any of its hidden life or virtue in the man that hath slain it as to himself; who having slain that whereby God gives life, is dead in trespasses and in sins, and cannot live any more, till God breathe upon and quicken this seed in him, and him by this seed. This is a great mystery. Doubtless the seed of life and godliness, wherein the life and godliness of the soul lies hid, must needs be a great mystery, and cannot be known but as God reveals it.

Secondly, Its of a gathering nature. It is of the nature of a net, *Matt. xiii. 47.* It gathers out of that which is contrary to God, unto God. It gathers out of the world, out of the sea of wickedness, out of the kingdom of darkness, out of a man's own nature and spirit, into God's nature and Spirit, and his light and kingdom, wherein the soul should dwell, and walk, and be subject, with God.

Thirdly, It is of a purging, cleansing nature. It is of the nature of fire, of the nature of water, inwardly and spiritually. This seed is Spirit and life in a measure; and by it, or by God's Spirit which dwells and is revealed in it, he washeth and purgeth away the filth of the daughter of Sion, and the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof. There is strength in this seed, and virtue in this seed, against all the strength of deceit and wickedness in the other seed; and as it springs up, and is received and joined to in the holy fear of the Lord, it prevails over it, and casteth away its darkness, and purgeth away and burneth up its filth, chaff, and corruption.

Fourthly, It is of a seasoning, leavening, sanctifying nature. It is like salt, it is like leaven. It seasons and leavens with life. It seasons and leavens with righteousness. It seasons and leavens with the image of God. So soon as ever it springs in the heart, it begins to leaven it; and if it be not snibbed, or grieved, or hurt, or quenched (for it is of a most sensible tender nature), it will go on leavening more and more with the nature of truth, into the likeness of the God of truth. *Mark ix. 50. Luke xiii. 21. Col. iv. 6.*

Fifthly, It is of an enriching nature. It is a hidden treasure or pearl of great price. It makes the wise merchant very rich, who sells all for it, and buys the field and it. He that buys the truth, and will by no means sell or part with it, but gives up to it, and makes it his treasure, oh! how doth it enrich his heart with that which is holy and heavenly! How rich doth it make him towards God! *Matt. xiii. 44. 46.*

Sixthly, It is of an improving, growing nature, of a nature that will grow and may be improved. The one talent may be increased into more. The little seed, like a grain of mustard-seed, will grow in the good ground beyond all herbs, and become a tree, a tree of righteousness of the Lord's planting, that he may be glorified, *Matt. xiii. 31, 32. chap. xxv. 16. chap. viii. 23.*

III.
Of the Effects.

WHAT are the effects of this seed?

Answ. The effects of the pure seed in the heart are very many, very great, very sweet, precious and blessed, which every one comes to experience, that experienceth the growth and spreading of it. I shall instance only in some few, to give a taste thereof.

The first I shall mention is, union and communion with God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of this seed, and of all that are united to it. Union and communion with God is still in this seed, and never out of it. For as in the seed of the Serpent a man is separated from God, alienated from his life, and can never come near him, nor have fellowship with him; so in the holy seed, in the seed of life, and in the seed of righteousness, in the seed of faith, the soul is united to God, hath access to him, the living fountain, and hath fellowship with him in that which is living and holy of him. Men may imagine an union and communion with God out of this, but none can truly unite to God, or have fellowship with him, but in the gift, in the grace, in the light, in the spirit which is of God.

Secondly, This seed felt springing in the heart, and joined to, brings down and keeps down all that is contrary to God. This honour and power God hath given to the seed of the woman (even to the least measure of it) that it should bruise the Serpent's head, and free the soul from captivity and slavery to the wicked one. So that the soul, in the living sense, authority, and virtue of this, may refuse yielding its members, its faculties, its will, its mind, its understanding, its affections to sin and unrighteousness. Yea, the devil, the great red dragon, the god of the world, the mighty spirit and power of darkness, being resisted in this, is still overcome. When any resist the devil in their own strength (in the strength of their own desires, abilities, and resolutions) he still overcomes them; but they that resist the devil in the faith that springs from this seed, still overcome him. So that sin is brought down, and temptations kept out of, by the virtue and power of the life and authority of the Saviour, that springs up in this seed of God, which the soul that is joined to (leavened with, and transplanted into) partakes of.

Thirdly, As it springs, and its operations are felt and received, it brings into the image and nature of God. It blots out the devil's image in the mind, and makes like God and like Christ. Yea, here we have the very mind of Christ, and are one with the mind of Christ. As in the Serpent's seed, the Serpent's image and nature is put on; so in this seed, the image of God and Christ is put on. Yea, the serpent, the dark spirit, the wicked spirit, the deceitful spirit, is here put off, and Christ is put on; and who ever would know the real putting off of the old man, and the putting on

of the new man, which is created in the righteousness and holiness of truth, must know it in this seed. Here the truth is known as it is in Jesus, in its effectual power and virtue, putting off the old image and nature, and putting on the new, even the heavenly divine image and nature.

Fourthly, It brings the mind, the heart, the soul, the spirit, into the new obedience (into its own obedient nature), even to do the will of God with great delight and pleasure. I delight to do thy will, said Christ. This seed is of his nature. It is a measure, a proportion, an heavenly talent of his grace and truth; a gift of light and life from him, the fullness, given to make willing (like him) to do the Father's will, and it really doth so, in so much as the soul, that is thoroughly leavened and one with it, can also say, I likewise delight to do thy will, O God! it is become my meat and drink; for I am nourished, refreshed, and delighted with the virtue that I feel spring in me, in doing thy will. Indeed, it is not so at first, while there is a nature, a will, a wisdom contrary to the nature, will, and wisdom of God; obedience is then hard, the cross is then a sore yoke upon my neck. But that nature being subdued, and the nature of the seed coming up and prevailing, what can be more delightful to this new nature, than to do the will of its heavenly Father, and to find the heart of the Father pleased with the child, which it always is, while the child is in tenderness of spirit, in the holy faith, and in the holy obedience to him!

Fifthly, It brings into the understanding, sense, and enjoyment of all the precious promises, and to the partaking of all the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus our Lord. All the promises are to the seed, and Yea and Amen in Christ; and the least measure of his life hath a share therein. The seed, the everlasting seed is the heir; and we joined to the seed, born of the seed, growing up in the seed, are joint-heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. So that every promise comes to be understood here, tasted of here, enjoyed here. How full are the scriptures of sweet and precious promises! Alas! what is it for men to apply them to themselves, when they have no right to them, nor indeed rightly understand them, nor were they intended by the Lord to their present states and conditions. But to come to the true understanding of the promises, to be led by the Lord into that condition, and preserved by him in that condition, to which the promises belong, and to have him bring home the promises to the heart, and drop in the sweet, healing, delighting, refreshing virtue of them; oh! how sweet, comforting, and gladdening is this! Indeed in this seed all the curses of the book pass away, and all the blessings flow in, and multiply on the soul day by day. So that this may well be called the blessed seed; for in it the soul is blessed, and filled with blessings by him who is able to multiply them upon the soul, and to guide the soul in the safe and right use and enjoyment of them.

But what need I mention any more? Here is light, here is life, here is righteousness, here is peace, here is heavenly joy, here is the holy power, springing and bringing forth their fruits, and precious operations and effects

in the heart; and here is assurance of the love of God in Christ for ever, and that God will never leave nor forsake that soul which is joined to him, and abides with him in this seed; but it shall be kept by the power of God, through the faith that springs from this seed, unto perfect redemption and salvation. *Amen.*

S O M E
Q U E R I E S
C O N C E R N I N G
G O D ' s K I N G D O M ;

Whereby the SEED thereof may be the better Illustrated and Understood.

Query 1. **W**HAT is the kingdom of God, which Christ said he must preach to other cities also? For therefore was he sent, *Luke* iv. 43.

Query 2. What is the kingdom of heaven, which first John the forerunner, and then Jesus himself, when he began to preach, bid men repent, because it was at hand? *Matt.* iii. 2, and *chap.* iv. 13. What would repentance advantage men? Would it fit men for entrance thereinto? Did those that truly repented and believed, come out of the kingdom of darkness and Satan, and enter into the kingdom of the dear Son? 2 *Peter* i. 10, 11.

Query 3. What is the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of God, which Christ (the everlasting, wise, and holy counsellor) adviseth men first to seek? *Luke* vi. 33. Where is this kingdom to be found? Where is this righteousness to be found? What is it hid and wrapped up in? Can it be found in any thing but what it is hid by God and wrapped up in?

Query 4. What kind of poverty of spirit is it, and who are those poor in spirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs? *Matt.* v. 3.

Query 5. How may men know, when the kingdom of God is come unto them? Is it not then manifest, when the stronger than the strong man, not only knocks at the door of the heart, but casts out Satan thence, and maketh spoil of his goods? *Matt.* xii. 28, 29.

Query

608 Some Queries concerning God's Kingdom.

Query 6. Who are they that shall enter into the kingdom of God? Are they not they who are born of water and of the Spirit? *John iii. 5.* Of what water? And how must they be born of the Spirit? Were not this worth the knowing? And they that become as little children, simple innocent (not wise or knowing after the flesh) that know the breast that is natural and proper for them, and thirst after and drink in the sincere milk of the word of life, from the breast of the heavenly wisdom? *Luke xviii. 17.*
1 Peter ii. 2.

Query 7. Who shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven? Shall not all they be excluded who want the wedding garment, who want the true righteousness? *Matt. v. 20.*

Query 8. What are the glad tidings of the kingdom of God? Is it not that the kingdom of God is come, and that his reign is set up, and setting up therein? *Luke viii. 1. Isa. lii. 7.*

Query 9. Who are they, before whom publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of God? *Matt. xxi. 31.* Who were they in that age? And who are they in this age? Oh! that men had hearts rightly to consider and understand!

Query 10. Who are they that the kingdom of God shall be taken from, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof? Are they not the wrong builders in every age, and such as are taught, by the wrong builders, to reject the living stone? *ver. 42, 43.*

Query 11. Who are the children of the kingdom that shall be cast out into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth? *Mark viii. 12.*

Query 12. Who are those God reveals the mysteries of the kingdom to in every age? (Are they not his begotten ones, his babes in the Spirit?) And who are those that he hides the mystery of the kingdom of life and salvation, and the way thereof from in every age? (Are they not the wise and prudent in their own apprehensions of the letter, without the Spirit?) *Matt. xiii. 11. and chap. xi. 15.*

Query 13. Who are those that are nigh the kingdom of God? Are they not those who know that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that the substance is beyond shadows? *Mark xii. 33, 34.*

Query 14. Who are those that shut up the kingdom of heaven against men? Are they not those who take upon them to expound the letter to men, and do not turn men to the Spirit, but quench it both in themselves and others? *Matt. xxiii. 13. Luke xi. 52. Isa. xxii. 22.*

Query 15. What kingdom is that, wherein he that is least is greater than the greatest prophet? Wherein he that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord before the inhabitants of Jerusalem? *Matt. xi. 11. Zac. xii. 8.*

Query 16. Who were they in the apostles age (and are there any such in this

Some Queries concerning God's Kingdom. 609

this age?) Who shall not taste of death outwardly, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power inwardly? *Mark ix. 1.*

Query 17. What kind of looking back is that, which makes a man unfit for the kingdom of God? Is it not a looking back from the plough, and not forward to the plough? And what plough is it a man must put his hand to, and not look back, that he may be fit for the kingdom of God? *Luke ix. 62.*

Query 18. What hand, what foot, what eye is it, which a man may enter into the kingdom of God with? And what hand, what foot, what eye is it, which a man cannot enter into the kingdom of God withal? *Mark ix. 47.*

Query 19. What is it to eat bread in the kingdom of God? Is not there the feast of fat things, and of wines well refined, made to the soul; and doth it not there sup with Christ, and Christ with it? And is not the wine of the kingdom there drunk new and fresh with Christ? *Luke xiv. 15. Isa. xxv. 6. Rev. iii. 20. Mark xiv. 25. Luke xxii. 16, 18.* Shall not the mountains there drop down new wine, and the hills flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah flow with water? And shall not a fountain come forth out of the house of the Lord, and water the valley of Shittim? *Joel iii. 18.*

Query 20. How may one become as a little child, that he may receive the kingdom? Must not that man be born anew? Must he not be unborn after the flesh, and born after the Spirit? (And not only so, but he must receive, and enter into and abide in the kingdom in that child-like simplicity, and innocent wisdom, whereof he is born)? *Luke xviii. 7. John iii. 3.*

Query 21. What is that flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and that corruption which cannot put on incorruption? *1 Cor. xv. 50.* (Let him that readeth understand the thing, both in the letter and in the Spirit).

Query 22. Who are the unrighteous, that shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Are they not both the manifestly unrighteous, and also the secretly unrighteous; who, though they may preach faith in Christ, and the righteousness of Christ, and may think themselves believers in him, and cloathed with his righteousness, yet have not received power to become the sons of God, nor through the Spirit have mortified the deeds of the body; but, at last, notwithstanding all their profession and pretence to Christ's righteousness (out of the faith that works by love, and out of the fine linnen, in their own filthy rags); are found by him workers of iniquity, *1 Cor. vi. 6. Luke xiii. 26. Rom. viii. 13. 1 John iii. 7.*

Query 23. Shall any enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they that do the will of Christ's Father which is in heaven? Is it enough to pray, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven? Is it not necessary also to receive

610 *Some Queries concerning God's Kingdom.*

that power which makes willing, and that nature and Spirit whose delight it is to do the will of the Father? *Matt. vii. 21.*

Query 24. Who shall be counted worthy of the kingdom of God? Shall not they who suffer for it in the holy faith and patience, and so are willing through the much tribulation (whether outward or inward, or both) to enter into it? *Theff. i. 4, 5. Acts xiv. 22.*

Query 25. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven? who hath need of them, and whom are they given unto? Were they given only to the apostles? Or only to the ministers of the church? Are they not given to every one that hath need of them, to whom God giveth understanding to open the mysteries of the kingdom with them? *Matt. xvi. 19.* The lawyers were blamed for taking away the key of knowledge, *Luke xi. 52.* Then they from whom they took it, should have had it, that they might have entered into the kingdom of heaven by it, and not have been hindered from entering for want of it; and they taking it away from others lost it themselves; for when Christ came and preached the kingdom, they could not see to enter into it, but were blind and opposed it, *Matt. xxiii. 13.* And now, under the gospel, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (he is not the Father's child, who hath not the Father's Spirit to lead him, *Rom. viii. 4.*); and he that hath the Spirit of Christ, hath he not the key of knowledge? *1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.*

Query 26. What is the joyful sound, which they that know are blessed? Is it not the testimony of the kingdom? Is it not the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom? Which they that repent, and become little children, being begotten and born of the Spirit, believing in the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, enter into, and walk in, the light of God's countenance there, *Psa. lxxxix. 15. Gal. iv. 15.*

Query 27. Which is the joyful sound of the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, after the ages of the great apostasy from the spirit and power of the apostles? Is it not this, *Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship the Great Creator in spirit and in truth?* He that heareth this sound, in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, doth he not hear the gospel? He that indeed knoweth this sound, doth he not know the joyful gospel-sound? And he that believeth and obeyeth it, doth he not believe and obey the gospel, even as God hath appointed it to be preached, and obeyed by all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people? *Rev. xiv. 6, 7.*

Query 28. What is that kingdom that cometh not with observation, but is inward, and to be found within? Where men need not say, lo here, or lo there, but may find the Messiah, and his light shining in upon them? *Luke xvii. 20, 21. 2 Cor. iv. 6.*

Query 29. What is that kingdom which stands not in word, but in power; nor is meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost? *1 Cor. iv. 20. Rom. xiv. 17.*

Query

Some Queries concerning God's Kingdom. 611

Query 30. What is it to come unto and visit the churches of Christ, in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ? Is it not to come in the fullness of God's Spirit and power, to feed them with the bread of life, to fill their hearts with the strength and virtue of life from God, as the Lord shall please to drop it into their spirits through them, and to build them up in the holy faith, that at length they may be filled with all the fullness of God? *John xxi. 15, 16, 17. Rom. xxv. 29. Eph. iii. 19.*

Query 31. Whom will the Lord assemble? And whom will he gather to make up his kingdom of, in the days of the gospel? Will not the Lord assemble her that halteth, and gather her that is driven out, and her that he hath afflicted? And will not he make her that halted, a remnant; and her that was cast off, a strong nation? And shall not the Lord reign over them in Mount Sion, from henceforth, even for ever? (For when Christ, the inward and spiritual King, comes to sit on the throne of his Father David, inwardly and spiritually, he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end, *Luke i. 32, 33.*) *Mic. iv. 6, 7. Ezek. xxxiv. 16.*

Query 32. What are the places wherein the sheep of God have been scattered, in the cloudy and dark day, which the Lord promised to deliver them out of? And what is the good pasture he will feed them in, after he hath delivered them? And what are the high mountains of Israel, where their fold and fat pastures shall be? Are not those things to be fulfilled to the spiritual people, in the inward and spiritual kingdom of the Messiah? *Ezek. xxxiv. 12, 14. John x. 3, 4.—9.—27, 28.*

EPISTLE

SERIOUS PROPOSALS

CHRISTIAN RELIGION

A Brief Treatise on 59 AP

Belief and Experience concerning the Christian
the Offering of the Lord Jesus Christ
body on the Cross for the redemption of
fathers, and the redemption of the world
those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ
and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ
who has been born to save the world
time in the world.

7

When in love with the Lord Jesus Christ
standing of the Lord Jesus Christ and
when the Lord Jesus Christ is in the world
wishes to then there is a time to then the Lord Jesus Christ

ISAAC TINKER

A N
E P I S T L E
TO ALL
SERIOUS PROFESSORS
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION:

WHEREIN

A BRIEF TOUCH of my Knowledge, Sense, Belief, and Experience concerning the Godhead, the Offering up of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in his Body on the Tree, as a Propitiatory Sacrifice to the FATHER, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to those who believe in his Name and Power, is nakedly laid before them; wherein I am not alone, but one with those who have so learned and experienced the same in the Leadings and Light of his HOLY SPIRIT.

Written in Love to them (that they might have the better Understanding of us, as to these Things, and might not think otherwise either of us, or of the Truth of our God, which we bear witness to, than there is Cause, to their own Hurt and Prejudice),

ISAAC PENNINGTON.

A N
S E R I O U S
E P I S T L E
T O

ALL SERIOUS PROFESSORS, &c.



FRIENDS,

AFTER it pleased the Lord to touch my heart with the sense of his truth, and to manifest unto me the principle of his life, in the demonstration and power of his own Spirit, insomuch as I could reason, dispute, consider about it no longer, but was fully satisfied concerning it; I say, after this, the love of God sprang in me towards you, and pure desires and breatheings unto him, that ye also might have the way cast up before you, and might so walk therein, as to come to partake of the same mercy and salvation. How I have mourned before the Lord for you, and desired that the stumbling-blocks might be removed from you, and that ye might so seek as to obtain (not in that wisdom and disputing mind, which still is shut out; but in that meekness, humility, and fear which gives entrance) the Lord God knoweth. Yea, the desires in me after you are still living; who knoweth, but the Lord may at length hear, and with his key so open your hearts, and so anoint your eyes with his eye-salve, that ye may see, acknowledge, believe in, and receive the beloved of your souls, even as he now appears (after the long night of darkness) a comforter of the drooping spirits of his people, with the pure light of life, wherein the redeemed house of Jacob (who sat in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death, mourning after him) now in holy rejoicing, and pure joy of spirit, walk before him? Oh! the Lord God visit you, and break in upon you, as he hath done upon us, and cause you to set to your seals also, as we could not but do, that this is he whom all our days we waited for, and longed after. And now there are two or three things in my heart to open to you, how

how it is with me in reference to them; for indeed I have not been taught to deny any testimony the scriptures hold forth, concerning the Lord Jesus, or any of his appearances, but am taught by the Lord more certainly and fully to own and acknowledge them.

The first is concerning the Godhead, which we own as the scriptures express it, and as we have the sensible, experimental knowledge of it. In which, *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One,* 1 John v. 7. This I believe from my heart, and have infallible demonstrations of; for I know three, and feel three in spirit, even an eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which are but one eternal God. And I feel them also one, and have fellowship with them (through the tender mercy of the Lord) in their life, and in their redeeming power. And here I lie low before the Lord in the sensible life, not desiring to know and comprehend notionally, but to feel the thing inwardly, truly, sensibly, and effectually; yea, indeed, this is to me far beyond what I formerly knew notionally concerning them, and I cannot but invite others hither.

Now consider seriously, if a man from his heart believe thus concerning the eternal power and God-head; that the Father is God, the Word God, the Holy Spirit God, and that these are one eternal God, waiting so to know God, and to be subject to him accordingly; is not this man in a right frame of heart towards the Lord in this respect? Indeed friends, we do know God sensibly and experimentally to be a Father, Word, and Spirit, and we worship the Father in the Son by his own Spirit, and here meet with the seal of acceptance with him. Nor would we contend with you about your crimes in this respect, but that ye provoke us thereunto, in laying to our charge as if we denied the thing; whereas we do not, nor can deny the expressions which the scripture useth, nor our own sense and experience concerning the thing. I pray let this suffice, and let us all strive to know God (and his Son Jesus Christ) in his life, Spirit, and power, wherein is unity and true demonstration; and not contend about such expressions concerning things, as are beside the scriptures. For would not ye yourselves think it hard (I mean such of you as read the scriptures seriously, desiring to understand and observe what is written therein) to have a belief of things imposed on you otherwise than is there written, and otherwise than ye have the sense, knowledge, and experience of them from the Lord?

The second is concerning the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, without the gates of Jerusalem. I do exceedingly honour and esteem that offering, believing it had relation to the sins of the whole world, and was a propitiatory sacrifice to the Father therefore. And surely he that is redeemed out of the world up to God by Christ, cannot deny that Christ was his ransom, and that he was bought with a price, and therefore is to glorify God, with his body and spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And, saith the apostle:

apostle Peter, ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, &c. but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, 1 Peter i. 18, 19. who so offered himself up to God through the eternal Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. This we do own singly and nakedly, as in the sight of the Lord; though I must confess we do not lay the sole stress upon that which is outward and visible (though we truly and fully acknowledge it in its place), but upon that which is inward and invisible; upon the inward life, the inward power, the Spirit within; knowing and experiencing daily, that that is it which doth the work. The outward flesh is not the meat indeed, nor the outward blood the drink indeed; but it is the Spirit, the life, the substance, which the birth that is born of the Spirit feeds upon and lives by. Oh! consider seriously, and wait on the Lord, rightly to understand that scripture, John vi. 63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.* What doth this scripture lay the stress upon? Is it not upon the quickening Spirit, and the words which the quickening Spirit speaketh to the soul, which are living, and give life to those that hear them? *Hear, and your soul shall live!* Hear his voice who giveth life, and your souls shall live by him; but can any one live without hearing the voice of him, who alone is able to quicken and raise the soul from death, and out of the grave of sin?

The third thing is concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness, to such as believe in his name and power, which we have felt, witnessed, and own to be thus.

God visits men by the light and power of his Holy Spirit, in their dead and dark estate, even while they are ungodly. Now, they that feel life, and in the quickenings of life, by the faith which comes from life, turn to the light and power which visits them, by this faith in the power, they are in measure transplanted out of the unholy root, into the holy root, where they partake of the nature and virtue of the true olive-tree; and the mercy of the Lord in and through his Son Jesus Christ, is spread over them, and their iniquities are pardoned, and their transgressions done away for his name sake, and they are reckoned by God, not as in the old root and unholy nature, but that whereon they lay hold by faith, and are in union with, they are reckoned by in the eye of the Lord; and they are accepted and beloved in him in whom they are found, by him who transplanted them there, and ingrafted them thereinto. So that Christ is really theirs, and they his; and what he did for them in his body of flesh is become theirs, and they have the benefit, and reap the sweet fruits of it. And if they sin afterwards, they have an advocate who pleads their cause with the Father, and who breathes livingly upon them again, and quickens faith in them, and gives them to turn from that which ran after them, and overtook them and defiled them. So that in this state of true faith in, and union with, the Son, the fountain is felt set open for sin and for uncleanness, which daily

daily washeth away the pollutions and stains of the mind, which it is liable to in the travelling state.

But now to every faith this doth not belong, but to the faith only which flows from the power of the endless life, and which stands in the power. The faith which is from the power is precious, having a precious nature and virtue in it, and very precious effects flow from it. For it is the substance of things hoped for; it is of a pure nature, which hath dominion, and giveth dominion over the wicked one. There is no overcoming of the faints here; for as it came from the power, so it stands near the power, and engages the power of life against the enemy, and so is still too hard for him. For he that resisteth the enemy in the true faith, still overcomes him and makes him fly, *James iv. 7.* But that belief on Christ, and applying his righteousness, which is not of this faith, nor in the true light of life, but according to the creature's apprehensions concerning things, that is not of the same nature with this, nor hath the same virtue, nor produceth the same effects; but notwithstanding such a believing and hoping, men are still in their sins, and they are not washed away from them by the blood of Christ, nor remitted or covered by the Spirit of the Lord. And oh! that men were wary, and did take heed in this matter, that they might not miss of true pardon from the Lord, and so find their sins bound by him, in the days of his refreshing others!

For there is a state, wherein there is an imputation of Christ's righteousness to persons reached to by the power of the Lord, and coming up out of the ungodly state, and so a real bringing into the righteousness. For in the true growth the soul daily grows more and more out of its own righteousness, out of the dark, corrupt image, into the righteousness of Christ, and into his pure image. Thus Christ is formed in the hearts of them that truly believe, daily more and more; they receiving him as an heavenly leaven, and giving up to be leavened by him, are changed daily more and more into the newness of Spirit, even until they become a new lump, even a lump wholly leavened, so that old things are passed away, and all things become new; that is, not of old Adam any more, but all of God in Christ, all of the new nature and Spirit, which is all of it righteous in the sight of God. Now this is it all should labour for and seek after, even the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to find an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, that they might really put off the old man with his affections and lusts, and put on the new man; the new man's nature, the new man's image, the new man's spirit, the new man's righteousness, the new man's holiness; that they might have the wedding garment on to be married to Christ in, and might be as a bride prepared for the bride-groom. Oh! it is precious for any one to feel his soul in this state! And who would not travel and wrestle, and strive and watch, and pray and wait, that he might be thus fitted by the Spirit of the Lord for his Son Jesus Christ? For, friends, there is a coming under grace,

under grace's wing, and out of shame and confusion because of sin, into the glory which is in the pure image; and there is a being changed from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, by the Spirit and power of the Lord. Oh! that such as take upon them the profession of Christianity, might feel the power, and wait upon the power, and know what it is to believe in the power, and live in the power; for without this, the oppressed state of Christianity is but dead, and dry, and cold, not having the true living sap and warmth in it. There are great deceits in the world about these things, but he that knoweth the truth as it is in Jesus, who was visited by the power, gathered to the power, and abides in the power, he hath that with him which anoints his eye and heart, and strengthens them against the most subtle devices and deceits of the transforming spirit. But whoever he be that professeth Christianity, and is not here, he is not safe, but the enemy hath ways of bewitching and deluding him, which he hath not wherewith effectually to withstand and avoid.

Now having nakedly expressed these things unto you, as they are in my heart, there is a question lies before me to propound to you, which deserves your serious consideration of, and ability to answer in the sight of the Lord, which is this:

Quest. Do ye rightly, truly, and fully (as the Lord requireth of you) know, esteem, and honour the Son? Do ye own him as God hath revealed him in the spirits of his children, since the apostasy? Do ye feel him as an horn of salvation lifted up there? Do ye find and experience him revealed within by the Father, as the seed of the woman, bruising the head of the serpent? Oh! this is precious knowledge, and the right way of truly knowing him as he came from the Father, lived in obedience to him, suffered for the sins of the whole world, ascended again to the Father, and now sits with him in glory! For, indeed, it is the chief thing, and that whereon the soul's rest depends, to know and feel him near. Oh! that we were one here (I mean in the inward sense and acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ), and we should soon be one in the other also!

For we, who are reproachfully by many called QUAKERS, are (for the most part) a people who have much and long sought after the Lord, and after the experimental knowledge of those truths, which are testified of and related in the holy scriptures. We sought not after a new Christ, or a new Spirit, or new doctrines concerning Christ or his Spirit; but to know Christ, so as to receive life from him, and to live to him in the life and spirit received from him; this hath been the single aim and desire of our souls. And if men could with patience consider what we hold forth, and wait till God open their understandings, they would not lay such blame upon us as they do in many respects, but find that we reverence the scriptures, believing and holding concerning the things of God according as is there expressed, from a true understanding received from the Lord, and in the true light and guidance of his Spirit. There is another question springs in my heart
unto

unto you, I beseech you consider of it seriously, perhaps there may be a blessing to you in it.

Quest. Do ye rightly and weightily consider and embrace that counsel of Christ, *Matt. vi. 33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness?* Do ye mind what Christ likens the kingdom to? Even a grain of mustard-seed, a pearl hid in a field, a little leaven, a lost piece of silver, &c. Do ye know, and are ye acquainted with that little thing which is like unto these? And do ye really and rightly seek after it? Do ye seek it where it is to be found? Do ye know the place where it is hid? And do ye take the right way to buy and purchase it? How is that? Why not by outward observation, faith Christ, but by inward sweeping the house, by keeping the eye upon it, and sweeping out the rubbish that covers it, this is the way to find it, purchase and possess it. Oh! that ye could all learn thus, and be thus exercised by the Spirit of the Lord daily. Surely they that thus seek shall find, and they that thus ask shall have, and they that thus knock, to them the everlasting kingdom shall be opened.

For mark the difference between the state of the law and gospel. The law was a shadow of good things to come. The gospel is a state of enjoyment of the good things shadowed out under the law. The law was a type of the kingdom, of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is set up under the gospel. In John's day the kingdom was at hand; but in the day of Christ's power the kingdom is come. Under the law there was a tabernacle pitched by man; but under the gospel the true tabernacle and temple is witnessed, which God pitcheth and not man; and the holy, spiritual, heavenly sacrifices, and the living covenant, whereof Christ is the mediator, and the law written in the heart, and the Spirit of the Lord put within, so that his presence is as really witnessed inwardly, in that which is truly his tabernacle and temple now, as ever it was witnessed outwardly, in his outward tabernacle and temple under the law. Oh! that Christians might not have the name only, but might be in the life and in the power, wherein these things are felt and experienced; for indeed the wonders of the Lord are seen in his temple, and his name is praised there, *Selah*. There he breaks the shield and the bow, the spear and the battle, *Selah*. There the enemy is overcome; the holy victory that bringeth him under, issueth out thence, *Selah*. There the well is opened, and the Philistine nature hath power to stop it no more, *Selah*. There the treasury of life and wisdom, and the riches of God's goodness are made manifest for ever.

Truly, friends, I have not lost any thing that ever I had, or acknowledged of God in the days of my former profession, by believing in the light which God hath now revealed in me, but have it still with me, and in greater clearness and plainness, and fuller demonstration than I then had it; but that of the flesh which mixed with it, and hindered it from being rightly serviceable to the Lord, and fully comfortable to me, that the Lord hath been removing by his searching light, and by the demonstration of his Spirit

and power. And if at length, after all my deep and long misery, the Lord hath given me to meet with and enjoy that which is truly excellent (among those whom men despise) I could heartily wish for you, that ye also might meet with and enjoy the same, without passing through that misery and bitter anguish and distress of spirit, through which the Lord led me thereto. The Lord preserve his people, by the arm of his mighty power, which he hath stretched out for them, and whereby he hath gathered them to himself. And those which are not yet of this fold, oh! that it would please him to seek them out, and bring them home also; that the Lord may be one, and his name one amongst us, and that that which divideth and scattereth from the living truth, might be scattered and brought to nought every where, in all who would be one, and desire to serve God (with one consent) in that which is true and pure, *Amen.*

620
An Epistle to all Professors, &c.
and power. And it is as length, after all my deep and long sighs, the
I had given me to meet with and enjoy that which is truly excellent
(among those whom I could hardly wish for you, that ye shou
might meet with and enjoy the same, about passing to you, that migh
and better, and with the desire of that, through which I am testi
thereof. The Lord preserve his people by the arm of his mighty power,
which he hath stretched out for them, and whereby he hath gathered them
to himself. And those which are not yet of the Lord, but that I would
please him to seek them out, and bring them home, that the Lord may
be one, and his name one, and his kingdom one, and that they which are divided and
scattered in the world, may be gathered together, and brought to glory
every one in his own way, and to the glory of God, who is one
God, and Father of all.

TO AN
ANSWER

OF

SOME QUERIES,

Given forth by me, J. P.

Concerning the

GOSPEL-BAPTISM;

WITH

ANSWERS to some other QUERIES
Returned, in a PAPER subscribed,
N. B.

R E P L Y



ANSWER of some QUERIES, &c.

Query 1. **W**HICH is the gospel-baptism, or of what kind is the baptism in the gospel-state? Is it outward or inward? Is it the figure of the inward baptism, or the inward baptism itself?

N. B's. Answer is, *It is a stooping to God's law.*

Reply, This is a very improper answer, and not all to the thing in hand; for the query was not concerning the stooping or subjecting to baptism, but what the baptism is, which is to be stooped and subjected to, whether that be an inward or outward baptism? Whether it be a figure of the holy and heavenly baptism of the gospel, or the holy and heavenly baptism itself? So that, in these words, there is no answer at all returned to the query, but rather the asserting of another thing, which the query did not mention, altogether improper in this place; for the query tends to determine what the baptism itself is, and when that is once determined, about stooping and subjecting to it, there will be no question I hope between us.

Now to explain what this law of God is, which is to be stooped to, he saith, *It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ*; quoting to prove it, *Rom. viii. 2. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. Mark xvi. 16.*

Reply, That baptism, water-baptism (as he afterwards expresseth it in his answer to this query), is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, I never read in scripture. Nor doth it effect in the heart what the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus doth, which the apostle saith, made him free from the law of sin and death; and it hath virtue and power in its nature over the law of sin and death, which water-baptism hath not. The law of sin and death is of an inward and spiritual nature; and the law of the Spirit of life also is of an inward and spiritual nature, stronger than the law of sin and death,

death, and is able to make free from the law of sin and death inwardly. But water-baptism is an outward thing, an elementary thing, not able to reach the law of sin and death, nor to make free from it. I beseech you consider, ye who look upon this to be a command and ordinance of our Lord Christ, are ye, or are they, who are outwardly baptized with water, made free from the law of sin and death thereby? Nay, Paul himself, who was by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made free from the law of sin and death, yet was not made free so by outward baptism. For if he was outwardly baptized (as I am ready to believe he was, it being usual at that time) it was when *Ananias* came to him, and when the scales fell from his eyes, and he received sight, *Acts ix. 18.* But he was not then made free from the law of sin and death; for afterward, in his inward and spiritual exercise and holy travail, he found and complained of a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin in his members, *Rom. vii. 23.* This was not a state of freedom from the law of sin; for with his flesh he still served it, while in this state. But when by the Spirit the flesh was crucified, when the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus prevailed over the law of sin and death in his members, then he was no longer under Satan's captivity by sin, but a delivered man, made free therefrom, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Then he knew the truth, and the power and virtue of the truth manifested itself in him, and made him free, and he was free indeed; and said no more he could not do the good he would, nor forbear doing the evil he would not; but he was more than a conqueror over the evil, and set at liberty to work righteousness, and could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. Oh! that ye that plead so much for outward water, knew this law writ in your hearts, and the effectual power and virtue thereof freeing you from the law of sin and death, and then ye would no more attribute that to an outward thing (or to your obedience as to such an outward thing) which belongs to the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, and to the law of his life inwardly written in the heart.

Another scripture he brings to prove water-baptism to be the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, is *Matt. xxviii. 19.*

Reply, If it were granted, that Christ did in that place command water-baptism, yet that would not prove it to be the law of the Spirit of life in him. The law of the Spirit of life in him is a deep thing (I beseech you do not mistake it), and hath mighty effects in the soul, which water-baptism never had, nor can have upon any. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath that virtue and power from God in its nature, which water-baptism is not capable of. The figures, the outward representations, have not a capacity to receive that from God, which the inward law and substance hath.

But

But that outward baptizing with water is there commanded by Christ, is not at all manifest from that scripture, but rather the contrary, if it be well minded. For Christ saith, all power was given him in heaven and earth, and bids them go and baptize. Doth he say with water? Nay; doth he not say into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit? So that now, when the gospel is preached in the Spirit and power of God, and his Spirit and power reacheth to our hearts, we are by that Spirit and power both taught and baptized inwardly, gathered into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and baptized into their name. And he that doth this in the heart, teacheth the heart to call this the gospel-baptism; and to call that which came forth in the hands of the fore-runner, the type or figure of this, the representation of this, the shadow of the gospel-baptism, but not the gospel-baptism itself. Indeed we dare not call John's baptism, or water-baptism, the gospel-baptism, or Christ's baptism; the Lord who hath manifested things to us, and taught us to put a difference between things that really differ, would judge and condemn us for so doing.

Mark further, Christ, who saith, *All power in heaven and earth is given me*, and therefore bid them go teach and baptize, yet withal bid them wait for the same Spirit and power which was given him, *Acts* i. 4.—8. And then having his Spirit and power, wherewith he inwardly taught and baptized, might they not be able therewith to reach the heart and conscience, and spiritually both to teach and baptize, as instruments in God's hand, in the springings of his life and power in them?

Now to manifest this further; for I feel the Lord opening my heart in this thing, and I hope it is for your sakes (Oh! ye mistaken ones in this weighty business!), that the Lord may explain things of this nature to you, and do you good thereby. To whom was this commission or command, in the authority and power of God's Spirit given, to go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name, &c.? Was it not especially given to the apostles, who were especially gifted thereunto? And was not Paul one; yea, one of the chief, made so by God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ? And he being in a special manner sent to the Gentiles, or Heathen nations (for the Jews were but one nation), did not this commission extend to him, and this command lie upon him? Now if this command did extend to inward, spiritual, gospel-baptizing, with the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, he had it as full as any of them; but if it be understood of water-baptism, we do not find that he had any such commission, but rather otherwise. Read his commission, *Acts* xxvi. 18. is there any thing of water-baptism in it? There is remission of sins, which depends upon believing and turning to God, in his illuminating Spirit and power, but nothing of water-baptism. And mark, it is God that opens mens eyes, and it is God that opens their hearts, and inwardly turns them from darkness to light, and Satan's power to God; yet Paul was sent by the Lord to do this. And is it an harder matter inwardly to baptize, than to do this? So that it

is

is not Paul, but the Lord that opens the eyes, and turns men; yet the Lord sent Paul to do it, and surely the Lord enabled him, by his Spirit and power, to do what he sent him to do.

Object. But though it is not here particularly expressed, yet it may be implied or intended. Or if this commission did not reach to him, the former apostolic commission would, he being made so extraordinary an apostle. Or at least it would reach him as a teaching disciple; for he that hath authority to teach the nations, hath also authority to baptize them.

Ans. No, Paul neither by this commission, nor by the apostolic commission, nor by his discipleship, had any authority or mission from God to baptize, if ye take baptism in this place for baptizing with outward water, as he himself expressly saith, *Christ sent me not to baptize* (speaking of water-baptism), *but to preach the gospel*, 1 Cor. i. 17. Nay, he thanks God that he baptized none of them, to his remembrance, but Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanus, ver. 14. 16. Now if he had looked upon water-baptism as Christ's ordinance, and as the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, would he thank God he had obeyed it no more?

Object. But he gives the reason of that, lest any should say he had baptized in his own name.

Ans. Why, persons might say he preached in his own name, yet that would not have excused him from preaching. No more would mens saying he baptized in his own name, excuse him from baptizing, if water-baptism had been Christ's command and ordinance.

The last place he brings to prove water-baptism to be the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, is *Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*

Reply. This sheweth the necessity of the gospel-baptism, but this doth not express which the gospel-baptism is, whether an inward or outward washing. We know, having been taught by the Lord, that there is no salvation without inward washing, which is also very demonstrable to others; but God forbid that all should be damned, that are not baptized with outward water.

He saith, *This law was confirmed by them that had the Spirit-baptism, being commanded to be obeyed by them that had the Spirit*, Acts x. 47, 48.

Reply. That Peter did command persons to be baptized with water, and that John's baptism, or water-baptism, was made use of in those days, and that John had it from God, and that it was done in God's name, this is not denied; but that water-baptism was Christ's baptism, or the gospel-baptism, this place doth not prove.

He saith further, *The kind of this baptism is water-baptism*, bringing *Matt. iii. 16.* and *Acts viii. 38, 39.* to prove it.

Reply. *Matt. iii. 16.* only proves that Christ was baptized with water, but doth not prove that water-baptism is the gospel-baptism. If I could prove by scripture expressly, that Christ was circumcised, yet that would not

626 *A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c.*

prove that therefore that was to be the gospel-circumcision. So though it be manifest, that Christ was baptized by John, with his water-baptism, yet that doth not at all prove that John's water-baptism is Christ's gospel-baptism. The end of John's baptizing with water was, that Christ might be made manifest, *John i. 31.* And when he is made manifest (when he who is the word, who is the life, is made manifest, *1 John i. 1, 2.*), then men must come to him, to be baptized by him with his baptism, which is with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, *Matt. iii. 11.* or with the Spirit of judgment and burning, *Isa. iv. 4.*

That other place of *Acts viii. 38, 39.* doth not at all prove that water-baptism is the gospel-baptism, but only that Philip did baptize the Eunuch with water, which is not a thing denied by us. Yea, what if I should grant, that the Lord did honour it as much as any shadow, or more than other shadows, by letting it have a longer time, and otherwise; yet that will not prove it to be Christ's baptism, or a gospel-ordinance. And if men do take it up in tenderness of spirit, bowing to the Lord, it is so much the better; yet it is not easy to believe that all do so; and those that do so, may err in their judgments, notwithstanding; though I am persuaded, the Lord is tender to persons that do things in tenderness of heart to him, notwithstanding some error or mistake in their judgments.

Query 2. *What is it that is to be washed in the gospel-state? Is it the outward or inward man? And what is the inward man to be washed with?*

Ans. His answer is, it is the body, the whole man or woman to go into the water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; so that the soul comes to be sanctified by the word and Spirit. For the proof of which he quotes, *John viii. 32.* and *chap. xv. 3.*

Reply. That the whole body was to go into the water, according to John's baptism, is granted; but that this is the gospel-baptism, or Christ's baptism, is denied by us. It is the inward Jew that is to be washed in the gospel-state, and is inward water, spiritual water, that he is to be washed with. I pray consider that scripture seriously (and the Lord give you the true understanding thereof), *Zech. xiii. 1.* Doth not that scripture speak of the gospel-state? What fountain is it that is opened in the gospel-state? Is it an outward fountain of outward waters, which is opened for sin and for uncleanness, to wash it away? The Lord knoweth of what nature sin is, and with what water it is to be washed away, and therefore openeth that fountain in the house of David in the gospel-state, which is proper to wash it away with. What is the house of David? Who is the Jew in the gospel-state? What is the tabernacle or house of David that is raised up then? What is the fountain that is opened there for sin, and for uncleanness? Can sin be washed away from any heart and conscience, but by the water of this fountain? And is not the gospel-baptism with this water? Do not those that are washed with this water feel the true washing, and know it certainly, evidently, infallibly, in the demonstration of God's Spirit, to be the true baptism;

baptism; not the figurative outward washing of the body, but the real inward washing of the soul? There is the washing of regeneration, *Tit. iii. 5.* which is with that which regenerates, which the water of the fountain of life and holiness doth, which God opens in the heart, and washeth the soul with, and causeth the soul to wash in; but the outward water, which washeth the outward body, hath no such nature or virtue in it, nor ever was appointed by God to produce any such effect. That the soul is sanctified by the word and Spirit, is granted: but that the soul is not sanctified by the word and Spirit, unless the body is washed with outward water, that is denied; and the scriptures afore-mentioned by him, of *John viii. 32.* and *chap. xv. 3.* do not at all prove any such thing. Now the gospel-obedience is to Christ's baptism, not to John's baptism. And the soul that is subject to Christ's baptism, doth not live in disobedience, for not taking up John's baptism; which God doth not allow him to do; but in the gospel-state, every one is to hear the Son, the Shepherd of the soul, and follow him the substance, and not Moses's circumcision or John's baptism.

Query 3. What is washed away by the gospel-baptism? Is it the filth of the outward body or flesh? Or the filth of the soul? And with what water is the filth of the soul to be washed away?

Ans. Sin is washed away by the gospel-baptism: for the proof whereof he quotes, *Acts xxii. 16.* *Rom. vi. 17, 18.*

Reply. Thus far we agree, that sin is washed away by the gospel-baptism; but what that baptism is which washeth away sin, herein we greatly differ. He affirmeth it to be outward water, and the washing of the outward man therewith. I affirm it to be inward water, from the inward holy fountain which God opens in the house of David, whereby the soul and conscience is washed from sin, and from uncleanness. That place of *Acts xxii. 16.* speaks of Paul's being baptized, and washing away his sins; but doth not say, that outward washing the body with outward water is the washing away of sins; but bids him wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And thus the washing away of sins is at this day experienced. The Lord manifests sin, turns the mind against it, and causeth a cry to the Lord, and then the Lord opens the fountain, causeth the pure water to flow, which the soul is washed with; and so far as it is washed therewith, it is clean in the sight of God, and hath the inward sense of its cleanness from the Lord. Yet that there was a figurative washing away of sins by John's baptism, I do not deny; for it was unto repentance, and they thereby professed repentance, and were to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, *Matt. iii. 8.* Nor doth that other place (*Rom. vi. 17, 18.*) prove, that washing the body with outward water washeth away sin, or maketh free from sin; but that which makes free from sin, is the power, virtue, and life of truth felt in the heart, washing and cleansing it. It is receiving the truth in the love of it, and being moulded into the nature of it, believing it in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, and obeying it in the obedience of the new

628 *A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c.*

nature, mind, and Spirit. And the answer of a good conscience comes from the inward baptism, from the washing which the apostle calls *anointing* the anti-type, 1 Peter iii. 21. which baptism is not the washing away the filth of the flesh or body; but an inward baptism, which so washeth inwardly, that the answer of a good conscience is presently felt, in the sight and presence of God. And then the soul knows what water it was washed with, which was able to produce, and did produce this effect.

He saith, *And thus it appears; First it takes off disobedience.*

Reply, What it takes off disobedience? The truth as it is in Jesus, the life and power of truth, felt and working in the heart, destroys the disobedient nature, and takes away the disobedience thereof; but outward washing of the body doth not, though men may apprehend there is an outward command for it, and judge they do it in obedience to that outward command. But obedience is from true understanding of the mind and will of God, and from that holy light of his Spirit wherein the holy understanding is given. And in this obedience the Lord's justification is witnessed; which is not witnessed in the other; I mean in that which men call obedience to that which they account a literal command, according to their conceivings and apprehensions.

Secondly, *As it leads persons unto Christ; for which he quotes, Rom. vi. 2, 3. Gal. iii. 27.*

Reply, That which leads unto Christ, and into the truth as it is in him, the children of the new covenant know, who are drawn by the Father, and are taught and learn of him to come to the Son, John vi. 44, 45. And how can we give that honour to John's baptism, or outward washing the body, which belongs to the Father, and his powerful Spirit? To be baptized into Christ is a great thing. To be buried with Christ by baptism into death, is a precious state, and effected by the inward work of the Spirit in the heart, working against sin, working the mind out of sin, into the nature, Spirit, and life of Christ. And the being baptized into Christ, is the real putting on Christ. It is the effect of knowing the truth as it is in Jesus, which causeth the putting off of the old man, and the renewing in the Spirit of the mind, and putting on the new, Ephes. iv. 22, 23, 24. But John's baptism, or the washing the body with outward water, doth none of these things, but is only a type or representation of what is done in and by the inward baptism.

He adds further, *And so the soul receives Christ in his prophetic and priestly office; so by Christ we are delivered from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God.*

Reply, The kingdom of Christ is spiritual, the kingdom of Christ is within, and he that would truly know him as he is king, prophet, and priest, must hear his knocks, know his voice, open to him, and let him in, and then he will manifest himself there, and the soul shall know what he is, even his king, priest, and prophet, and feel him exercising all these holy offices,

A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c. 629

offices, in the authority and power of his Father, in the heart. This is precious knowledge indeed. Yea, he shall know him with his fan in his hand, thoroughly purging his floor from all unbelief, from all disobedience, from all chaffiness and earthenness; yea, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; for his fan turns against them all, and his Spirit of judgment and burning flames inwardly against them all; and as they are consumed and burnt up, the pure fear of the Lord is increased in the heart, wherein holiness is begun, and at length perfected, by the thorough circumcision and baptism of the Spirit. But the Corinthians were not cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit by water-baptism, but were afterwards exhorted by Paul to do it.

Query 4. What water is it that the inward Israel shall be sprinkled with, that they may be clean? Is it not inward water, spiritual water? And can any be clean or baptized in the sight of God, that are not baptized with this water, wherewith God sprinkleth and washeth his spiritual and inward Israel?

Ans. Baptism is not sprinkling, nor so rendered by the Spirit, but baptize; baptize is to dip or put into the water.

Reply. When God sprinkleth his inward Israel, with the water which he hath promised to sprinkle with, he doth sufficiently cleanse them; for whom the Lord sprinkleth with this water, they are cleansed thereby, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25.* And this relates to the gospel-state; for a new heart is immediately promised, *ver. 26.* which is the promise of the gospel-covenant. And the blood of sprinkling in the new-covenant doth sufficiently wash and cleanse, *Heb. xii. 24.* *Rev. i. 5.* sprinkling and dipping are but figures; but they are both comprehended in the substance, which we should wait inwardly to feel and experience. The water which Christ speaks of, *John iii. 5.* (which place he quotes) is not outward, but of the same nature with the Spirit, whereof the soul is washed and born again, and riseth up in the new life with Christ.

He saith, *The inward fits for the outward.*

Reply. It is true, John's baptism did require inward qualifications (in which respect it went beyond circumcision), and so where those qualifications were found, who could forbid water? But Christ's baptism, the baptism with Spirit and fire to purify the mind and burn up the dross, is of an higher ministration, and a far more glorious baptism than that, *Matt. iii. 11.* *He shall baptize you: you, what you? You whom I have baptized with water.* So that those whom he had baptized to repentance, he tells of another baptism, a more glorious baptism than his, which happy are they that wait for, and feel accomplished in them.

Query 5. What is the gospel-circumcision? Is it not an inward and spiritual circumcision? and is not the circumcising knife, wherewith the inward Israel is circumcised, inward and spiritual? And is not the gospel-baptism, wherewith the inward Israel is washed, as inward and spiritual as the gospel-circumcision?

630 *A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c.*

Is not this circumcision and washing of the same nature, and effected without outward hands?

Ans. It is inward, spiritual, heavenly, that which God works by the knife of his word, *Heb. iv. 12. Hos. vi. 5.*

Reply. This is true; we whom God hath called, quickened, enlightened, circumcised, and baptized, experience it so; and happy is he, if he experience it so also. For the word is living, and makes alive; the word is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and it doth inwardly pierce to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit (Oh! this is a blessed experience inwardly, where-ever it is felt!), and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And this word came to the prophets, and did hew through the prophets, and God's judgments by this word were as a light that went forth. This word is the word of life, and the life is manifested in it, as the apostles knew in their day, *1 John i. 2.* and as God's gathered ones know in this day.

But let him take heed, lest he put the letter, or outward descriptions of heavenly things, for the word; for the kingdom or gospel-state stands not in such kind of words, but in power, *1 Cor. iv. 20.* and the apostles were made able ministers of the New-Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit ministereth life, *2 Cor. iii. 6.* So we distinguish the word of life (the quick piercing word that giveth life), from the words which came from it, *Acts v. 20.* which words are also living, as they come from the life; otherwise, in the mouth, understanding, or comprehension of him who is not living (nor in a true sense and understanding of them), they are not life. So men should not strive to comprehend things with that outward understanding, which can never attain thereto, but wait to receive the understanding from God, whereby they may know him that is true, and his gospel-ordinance, and the holy laws of his kingdom, and be found in the obedience thereof to him in the Spirit.

Now granting the gospel-circumcision to be inward and spiritual, how can he make the gospel-baptism to be of a nature inferior to it, even outward and carnal, *viz.* a washing with the elementary water of this creation, and not with the inwardly sanctifying and cleansing water of life, which God sprinkleth upon his spiritual Israel, and also plunges their souls into? And consider seriously, whether the apostle, speaking both of circumcision and baptism, *Col. ii. 11, 12.* did intend either of them as to the outward, and not rather both of them as to the inward, wherein the true inward spiritual circumcising, and also the true inward baptizing, is witnessed, and both without hands; for neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails (no more doth outward washing the body, or not washing it avail) but a new creature; the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision and baptism of Christ, this avails, and is of great esteem with God.

Query

A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c. 631

Query 6. *What is the one baptism of the spiritual Israel, without which there is no salvation? Can there be any salvation without the inward washing of the soul? May there not be salvation without the outward washing of the body?*

Ans. That which Christ Jesus commanded; for there is but one baptism commanded, and that leads us to Christ and God.

Reply. Was not John's baptism commanded, which was an outward washing? And is not the inward washing commanded also? Was not Israel commanded to circumcise their hearts, and was not that an inward circumcision? And were they not also commanded to wash their hearts from wickedness, and was not that an inward washing or baptism? How could they do either of these? Why, did not Moses direct them to the word nigh in their mouth and heart, whereby both these might be done? And can either of these be done in any heart, but by the operation of this word of life inwardly in the heart? We know, *There is no other name under heaven, nor way to be saved, but Christ* the word of life, and light of men. But they that are saved by him, must know him as a living stone within, and come from all else in their hearts to him (as to a precious foundation-stone of life), and be new-created by him, circumcised and baptized into him, and so walk in him, the new and living way, and serve God his Father, in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter; which happy are they that understand what it is, and are found in this obedience to the Lord, and in thus worshipping him in his Spirit and truth, which is the gospel-service and worship. For men may easily mistake about the letter; but the new birth doth not mistake concerning the Spirit, nor the true sheep concerning the voice of Christ.

Query 7. *How are men buried with Christ by baptism into death? Is it not an inward spiritual death, that men are thus buried with Christ into? And is it not effected by an inward spiritual baptism?*

Ans. By water-baptism; for Christ was buried, so are we. Christ was buried by baptism in the water, so are we.

Reply. Christ was outwardly circumcised; so are we also circumcised; not outwardly, as Christ was. Christ was not circumcised to effect any thing upon him (for he needed it not), but for our sakes. And he was baptized for our sakes also, that we also might be circumcised, and baptized with the circumcision and baptism which we need, which is the circumcising and baptizing of our souls, and not the circumcising or washing of our bodies.

He adds, *Christ did it to fulfil all righteousness; we to fulfil the righteous law and will of God, we thereby entering into covenant with God, whereby we set to his seal* (I suppose he means, *our seal*) *that he is true.*

Reply. It remains yet to be proved, that baptizing with water is God's law and will in the gospel-state. I am sure there are those that are taught otherwise by him that reacheth all his children, from the least to the greatest,

greatest, in the new covenant? And the new covenant is an inward covenant; which they that hear God's voice therein, and have his law written in their hearts, and obey it, are led by him more and more into. Now the new covenant is not made with every thirsty one after the living waters, but only such as come to Christ in the drawings and teachings of his Father; and when they are come to Christ, incline their ears, and hearken diligently to him, *Isa.* lv. 1, 2, 3. such assuredly know and enjoy the sure mercies of David, having God to be their Shepherd to spread their table for them; and they eat that which is good, and are satisfied with the fat things of his house, and so can set to their seal that God is true and faithful, who hath not only promised such things, but is daily fulfilling and making them good in and to their souls.

Query 8. What is that baptism, from whence there certainly and constantly ariseth the answer of a good conscience towards God? Doth not this always arise from the inward baptism, from the washing away of that which defileth the conscience? Is not then the conscience thereby made good and holy in the sight of God? And doth it not then answer the holy will, law, and Spirit, of the holy and good God?

Answ. The baptism of water; being that which Christ commanded.

Reply, Water-baptism, or outward washing of the body, cannot make the conscience good; for a man may do that upon a mistake, through error of judgment, and go unchanged into it, and come unchanged out of it. But the inward circumcision, and inward baptism, doth really cut off and wash away the sin and filth of the conscience, and so make it good; and then the good conscience doth answer to God, in what he teacheth and requireth. But that water-baptism was commanded by Christ, is still denied on our part, and unproved on his.

He saith, *A clear conscience ariseth from a true conformity to the law of God.*

Reply, This is very true. But what is the law of God in the new covenant, but what he writes in the heart? God is the teacher of his people in the new covenant; and what he teacheth and requireth of them by his Spirit, is their law. Christ is their law-giver, and he gives forth his law of life, from his Spirit of life, to those that wait for it, *Isa.* xlii. 2. And he likewise opens the scriptures, and shews what God taught and required of former ages, and of this present age. He shews what the shadows of the law were, and what the ministration of the prophets and John was, and what the ministration of the Son is; who is faithful in all his house to every one there, as a Son, to give the law of the Spirit of life to them; even as Moses the servant was to give, the outward law to those of his house. So that it is not sufficient to read a scripture, or scriptures, and say this was commanded, and this was practised of old; but to wait to know how it was commanded, and how practised, and of what nature it was, whether of the everlasting nature of the kingdom, which is to remain; or of an outward, elementary

A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c. 633

elementary nature, which might be shaken and pass away. For it was the will of God, that all such things should be shaken and pass away, that the kingdom itself alone, which cannot be shaken, might remain, *Heb. xii. 27.*

Conclusion. Oh! that people knew and experienced the baptism which is the substance, and then they would not idolize that baptism, or outward washing, which in its nature can be no more than a sign, signification, or representation of that which is the substance!

Ans. Our baptism, which is the gospel-baptism, being baptized into Christ, is that which brings us to the substance, Christ Jesus our Lord, the substance of all things. So that signs or significations are nothing to us, but Christ is all to our souls.

Reply. That water-baptism is the gospel-baptism, can never be proved by you, it being neither of the nature of the gospel, nor commanded by Christ the law-giver in the gospel. And that this washing with outward water is the baptizing into Christ, is a very low and dark apprehension, far from truth, and the right understanding of the scriptures, and the experience of those who are baptized with Christ's baptism. And that which brings to Christ, is the Father, by his drawings; not outward baptizing, or washing the outward man with outward water; that is but a bodily exercise, and bodily exercises profit little, so far are they from bringing to Christ the substance. And as for what he saith concerning signs and significations; oh! that it were so indeed, that they were nothing to you, but Christ were all to your souls! For if it were so indeed, could ye thus cry up a figure or shadow of the gospel-baptism, and be so ignorant of the substance. Do the Jews know the inward circumcision? Or do ye know the inward baptism, any more than the Jews knew the inward circumcision? Read that scripture, *Rom. ii. 28, 29.* and the Lord apply it home to your souls; *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.* Now may not the Spirit of God say in these our days (yea, of a truth the Spirit of our God doth say so, and many have heard his voice so speaking), he is not a Christian which is one outwardly, neither is that gospel-baptism, which is outward on the flesh; but he is a Christian which is one inwardly, and the gospel-baptism is that of the heart in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. The Jews praised the outwardly circumcised, and ye praise the outwardly baptized; but God praiseth the inwardly circumcised and washed. So that their justification and praise is of him, and they matter not the justification or praise of man.

He adds further, *Neither do we these things but to obey him and follow his footsteps that he went before us in, and so he is our leader and commander.*

Reply. Every practice of his he doth not lead or command his disciples to follow him in. He was circumcised outwardly; are we to take it up because it was his footstep? No more are we to take up the outward wash-

634 *A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c.*

ing, because it was his footstep. But we are to take up that circumcision which cutteth off that which is evil from us, and crucifieth to the world; and we are also to take up that baptism which inwardly baptiseth and effectually cleanseth from sin. Oh! how plain are these things, where the eye is single, and the mind not blinded or prejudiced with its own conceivings and misapprehensions!

He adds yet, *So that we are not idolizing any thing, but following Christ in the way he went before us in.*

Reply, I wish from my heart ye were not idolizing John's baptism, or water-baptism, by setting it in the place of Christ's baptism, and attributing that to it which belongs to Christ's baptism, and not to it. To affirm that water-baptism is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, and that stooping to it is stooping to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, and that the soul cannot be sanctified without going into the outward water; for till then it is in disobedience, and charged as a transgressor; and the inward man cannot be washed while living in disobedience, and that sin is washed away by this outward water-baptism, and that this takes off disobedience, and so is the answer of a good conscience in obedience to God, and that it leads persons into Christ, with more of this nature; what is this but the idolizing of an outward elementary creature and creaturely action, and an undervaluing of that water and blood which alone can do this? Now to term this idolizing is no reflecting on Christ; but on mens error of judgment, and their erroneous practices which ensue thereupon; much less is it blasphemy, although Christ himself was accounted a blasphemer for testifying the truth, by the professors of that age; and such a judgment may his followers meet with now, from the professors of this age.

He saith further, *I know that the pretence of all this is the baptism of the Spirit.*

Reply, He is greatly mistaken. It is not a *pretence*, but a feeling of the baptism of the Spirit, by the water of the fountain of life which God opens in the heart, and the being born of this water and of the Spirit. By this means we came to know the baptism which saves, and the Spirit's washing and regenerating us therewith; and if we should give the honour of this baptism to the washing of the body with outward water, we should sin against the Lord, and be unfaithful in the testimony he hath given us to bear.

He saith, *Take notice that the baptism of the Spirit is a promise, not a duty.*

Reply, That it is a *promise* is granted; but it is also a *duty* to receive the promise, and to give up to be baptized by him. Now to open this a little; for I write in love and tender good-will, and in that which opens my heart. The Spirit of the Lord did strive with the old world. What did he strive for? Did he not strive to reclaim them from sin? To circumcise them? To wash them? God gave his good Spirit to the Jews to instruct them. To what end to instruct them, but that they might circumcise the foreskin

foreskin of their hearts, and be no more stiff-necked; and that they might be inwardly washed in heart from their wickedness, and their vain thoughts might no longer lodge within them. So that the inward circumcision and the inward baptism of the soul and conscience (from whence is the answer of a good conscience), was before either the outward circumcision or outward baptism, and is the substance, whereof the other were but figures. The Spirit was not only promised in the time of the gospel, but was also promised in the time of the law (though more abundantly promised to be poured forth in the gospel days), *Prov. i. 23.* Now what doth it do when poured forth? Doth it not enlighten, quicken, lead, touch, wash, or sanctify, purge out the old leaven, and leaven with the new leaven of the kingdom? Here is true understanding and true experience. Oh! that ye might come to witness and partake of it! Do ye desire to obey? Oh! that ye were taught of God to know Christ, as the Father reveals him inwardly, and to deny and put off all that is contrary unto him, that ye may be baptized into him, and be found in him, filled and cloathed with his righteous Spirit, life, and nature; in which righteous Spirit, life, and nature, the true circumcision and the true baptism is witnessed.

He saith, *The promise of the Spirit, John calls the baptism of the Spirit, Matt. iii. 11.*

Reply, Though the Spirit, when poured out according to the promise of the Father, did baptize several ways; yet that is not it which John there calls the baptism of the Spirit; but the baptism of the Spirit is the inward purging away of sin and filth, by the Spirit and its fire, or by the Spirit of judgment and burning; which those that were baptized by John were afterwards to expect and wait for, that with his fan their floor might be purged, their chaff burnt up, and the wheat gathered into the garner, *ver. 12.*

He saith again, *Take notice, that the being baptized with the Spirit, or having the Spirit, does not excuse us of our being baptized in water, but rather fits us for it.*

Reply, If baptism with water were a command of Christ, being baptized with the Spirit, or having the Spirit, would not excuse from it. But if baptizing with the Spirit be the gospel-baptism, and that which was figured out or represented by John's baptism, then we are not to turn back from the substance to the figure, or from Christ's command to his disciples, to God's command by John to his disciples.

He quotes *Acts viii. 29.* compared with *ver. 38, 39.* *Where (saith he) we may see, that the Spirit was in the work of the administration of water-baptism, as it leads men to the truth of the gospel, and therefore it is that the apostle saith, that by one Spirit we are baptized into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13.*

Reply, God, from whom the law was, and the prophets, and John's preaching and baptism, did work in them all by his Spirit; and John's mi-

636 *A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c.*

nistratation being the highest, God might please to work most therein. But that this is Christ's baptism, commanded by him in the gospel, or the water thereof the water wherewith Christ washeth the soul, or the water of regeneration whereby God regenerates, that we cannot but deny, being taught of God, and having experience of the contrary. Yea it is manifestly but a shadow of Christ's baptism, and not the baptism itself; not the baptism of his Spirit and fire, wherewith alone the soul can be inwardly purged, *Matt. iii. 11.* compared with *Isa. iv. 4.*

But that water-baptism leads men into the truth of the gospel, is his great mistake. He had said but a few lines before, *that it is the office and work of the Spirit of God to lead us into all truths of the gospel*; let him stick to that, and wait to experience that, and not attribute that to a dead thing, which belongs to the living Spirit.

And whereas he interpreteth that scripture, *1 Cor. xii. 13.* of outward visible baptism with outward water, that is a very manifest misapprehension. (I wish he did not so misunderstand and misinterpret scriptures, for want of the right key which opens them). For all that are baptized with outward water (whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free), are not baptized into one body; but all that are inwardly baptized by the one Spirit, are baptized into the one body, whereof Christ is head, and they all drink into one Spirit; in which Spirit they all have life to act in the body, and have a living sense of their place and service in the body, which they who only are baptized with water have not.

Thus far in way of Reply to his Answers to those Queries, which did flow from me, as life and the love of God sprang up in me, without any premeditation at all; which retain their truth, evidence and strength, notwithstanding all that he hath said to invalidate or weaken them. Now follow his Queries returned to consideration, which it is on my heart to return an Answer to, in the nakedness and plainness of truth, as the Lord hath pleased to open and give me the knowledge and experience of the things queried of.

Query 1. Whether the baptism of the Spirit be not a promise, and the work of God to give it to his creatures, and the baptism of afflictions an imputation of wicked men; and but one baptism commanded by Christ as a duty to submit unto, if not water-baptism, what is it then?

Ans. The baptism Christ commands his disciples to submit to, is his own baptism, the baptism of his Spirit. The true disciples of Christ are inward Jews and inward Christians, and they are to submit to the inward circumcision and baptism of Christ their Lord. They are to be washed inwardly with the water of that fountain, which God opens to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness, *Zeck. xiii. 1.* Doth God set this open for the inward and spiritual Jews or Christians?

Christians? And is it not their duty to be washed or baptized inwardly with it? They are to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, *Matt. iii. 11.* Every disciple ought to wait for, receive, and experience this baptism. They are to be washed with the Spirit of judgment and burning, and to have their corrupt blood purged away thereby, *Isa. iv. 4.* They are inwardly to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, that they may inwardly rise up in the newness of the life, and of that living name, *Matt. xxviii. 19.* They are to be baptized into the one body, which is the spiritual body; and by spiritual baptism is the soul baptized into it (and not by that which is carnal), and so to come to Mount Sion, and the heavenly Jerusalem, and enter into it; which the uncircumcised and unclean cannot enter into, but they alone that know the truth as it is in Jesus, and keep it, *Heb. xii. 22. Isa. lii. 1. and chap. xxvi. 2.*

Query 2. If but one baptism commanded, and men cannot baptize one another with the Spirit, and it is sinful to afflict one another, what baptism is this one baptism?

Ans. God made his apostles (and makes those whom he makes ministers in the gospel) able ministers of the New-Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. And if the Lord make them able ministers in his Spirit, what should hinder them from ministering the spiritual baptism? The same Spirit that teacheth through them, is it not able to baptize through them? *Who is sufficient for these things,* saith the apostle, *2 Cor. ii. 16.* Were they sufficient to teach, but as God taught through them? And are they not sufficient to baptize, as God baptizeth through them? How often have we found our souls taught and baptized by the water of life flowing from the spring of life through the holy ministry, which God hath mercifully raised up, and maketh use of, in these our days?

Query 3. Whether it be not the work of God on the inner man, that brings the outward man to be baptized, and obey the commands of God?

Ans. It was the work of God on the inner man, when John's baptism was commanded by God, to bring men to John's baptism; and it is the work of God's Spirit in the heart, which brings men to discern and subject to Christ's baptism; for the baptism of Christ is not discerned by man's wisdom, or by the reasoning mind, but by the sense of life in the heart.

Query 4. Whether men can be truly sanctified by faith and the Spirit, that are disobedient to God, and live so?

Ans. No, they cannot. But true obedience requires true light and true understanding; for all are not obedient who judge themselves so, but those whom God judgeth so. The inward Jew is obedient to the inward baptism, which Christ hath appointed, and dareth not set up John's outward in its place.

Query 5. Whether the Spirit of God doth not distinguish between sprinkling of the Spirit and baptism.

Ans.

638 *A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c.*

Answ. They are both figurative expressions; but they tend to, and end in, one and the same thing in substance, which is inward cleansing. *Sprinkling clean water upon the soul doth cleanse it, Ezek. xxxvi. 25.* And dipping into, or being overwhelmed with, the water of life, in the pourings out of the Spirit upon the soul, doth cleanse also. For there is a river, the streams whereof do not only refresh, but also cleanse and carry away sin and filth from the soul, as with a flood.

I pray consider that place, *Isa. xlv. 3, 4, 5.* When God, from the fountain of life, pours out water and floods upon him that is a-thirst, do not these floods and water wash him and nourish him also? Do not they wash away that which hinders his springing up and growth in the truth? And is not he hereby baptized into the name of the Lord? God is the God of Jacob, the Holy One of Israel. And doth not one that is washed, feeling that carried away by the floods and overflowings of the Spirit, inwardly feel, and presently say in his heart, *I am the Lord's? And another surname himself by the name of Israel?* Now I am one of the seed of Jacob indeed, and of God's Israel, and that name belongs to me. I am inwardly washed from my former wicked and deceitful heart; that is gone, and a new heart and spirit of God's creating and forming is witnessed by me, and God's Spirit testifies in me, and to me, *That I am an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.*

Query 6. *Whether the circumcising knife be not the word of God, and the soul obeying of it be not a sign the knife hath entered, and taken place on the soul of man?*

Answ. It is true; the word of God, the quick, powerful, piercing word of life, the word which lives and abides for ever, and is a commandment of life in the heart, (*Deut. xxx. 11, to 15.* which is the commandment, law, or word of the new covenant, *chap. xxix. 1.* which is the word of faith, which the apostles preached, *Rom. x. 8.*) this word of God is the circumcising knife, and the soul obeying of it cannot but be circumcised by it.

But I am jealous with a godly jealousy, lest he mistake and call somewhat else the word, and reckon his obedience to what he apprehends from the letter, to be obedience to the word; and if so he greatly deceives his own soul. And I have good reason thus to be jealous concerning him, because I find him, in his answer to my first query, terming water-baptism the *Law of the Spirit of life in Christ*; which cannot but be strange language to all that know the nature, virtue, life, and power of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Query 7. *Whether baptism doth not lead men into Christ, as obedience to the mind of God in Noah's time led him into the ark, that we may be saved by Christ, as Noah was by the ark?*

Answ. It is the Father, by his drawings, that leads men to Christ, and Christ by his Spirit baptiseth them into himself. He conforms those to himself

himself that come to him, both in his death and resurrection, by the Spirit and power of the Father.

Now it is this baptism, or the inward washing, which removeth that which destroys; and the soul that is subject to the ministration of Christ's Spirit, and gives up to be washed by him, is washed and made clean, and comes into the number of the saved; for feeling the power which saves, and experiencing the virtue and operation of it, he must needs be saved thereby.

Nor was it obedience in Noah's time which led him into the ark, but God's voice or special command to him, which he received in the faith (*By faith he prepared the ark*, Heb. xi. 7.), which faith produced obedience; so that it is faith in the mighty power of God which saves; which power works mightily in them that truly believe, mightily circumcising, mightily baptizing, mightily burying with Christ, burying the soul into his death, and raising it up again in the newness of his life. So that here is a real inward work of faith, a real inward appearing and working of the power, and a real obedience to, and a going along with the power in its work, in the holy fear and trembling; and so the soul works out its salvation, by the power which works in it *both to will and to do according to God's good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Eph. i. 19, 20.

Query 8. Whether Christ was not buried in the water-baptism? We then being baptized, are we not buried with Christ by baptism?

Ans. Christ was circumcised with Moses's circumcision, and was also baptized with John's baptism, which was a dipping into, or burying in, the water; yet notwithstanding this, he hath his own spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism, to be administered in the gospel-dispensation unto his. And as all Moses's disciples were to be circumcised with his circumcision, and all John's disciples to be baptized with his baptism unto repentance, so all Christ's disciples are to be inwardly circumcised and baptized with his inward circumcision and baptism, which is the substance of both the other figures.

Now those only that are thus circumcised, are circumcised by Christ, and those only that are thus baptized, are buried with him by baptism into his death; which must be, before they can truly know a rising with him in his life. May not a man or woman easily, from an apprehension in their understanding, go into the outward water, and rise up again out of the water, and yet not know what it is to die with Christ, or rise with Christ? But he that knoweth the inward baptism, witnesseth and experienceth these things, being made a partaker with Christ, both in his death and resurrection.

Query 9. Whether obedience to the law of God doth not give a soul a good conscience in the sight of God, and disobedience make the conscience guilty? And whether ever the soul can be clear of sin, while living in disobedience to the law of God?

Ans.

640 *A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c.*

Ans. It is God's sprinkling the soul, whether with the water of his holy fountain, or with the blood of the covenant, and his washing them therewith, which makes the conscience good, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Zech. xiii. 1. Heb. xii. 22.* (Let it be considered seriously, whether outward water, or inward, be intended in that place? *Heb. xii. 22.* And when David said, *He washed his hands in innocency, Psa. xxvi. 6.* whether he did it with outward water)? This water, this blood, this sprinkling, this washing, is received in obedience, and not in disobedience. But what obedience is it received in? Is it received in obedience to Moses's circumcision or John's baptism? Or in obedience to Christ's circumcision and baptism? And let him, and all of his persuasion, seriously weigh, whether ever the soul can be clear of sin, while living in ignorance of, or disobedience to, Christ's circumcision and baptism, whereby alone sin can be cut off from the heart, and washed away from the conscience?

Query 10. *Whether to obey God, be not the way to meet with God, and to be baptized of God?*

Ans. Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams. And to obey Christ's Spirit in the gospel-dispensation, being inwardly circumcised and washed by him, is far better than to be circumcised with Moses's circumcision, or baptized with John's baptism. The day is dawned, and the shadows are fled away, and the obedience is not now to the shadowy ordinances of Moses, or John the Baptist, but to the light of the day, which shines in the hearts of the children of the new covenant. And they only have the true knowledge of Christ, and the true obedience, who know the shinings of this light, and walk with God in the shinings thereof, *2 Cor. iv. 6. 1 John i. 7.*

Query 11. *Whether man can idolize God's ordinances, in keeping, doing, loving, and living up to them?*

Ans. They that set up Moses's circumcision, or John's baptism for Christ's (which are not outward, as Moses's and John's, but inward and spiritual), they idolize them, and are found guilty of so doing, in the sight of him who judgeth righteously. Is it not idolizing the shadow or figure, to set it up in the place of the substance?

Query 12. *Whether mens calling the keeping, doing, loving, and pleading for God's ordinances, idolatry, be not some of those hard speeches Jude speaks of?* *Jude xv.*

Ans. He still all along takes the thing in question for granted. We grant that Moses's circumcision was God's ordinance, and that John's baptism was God's ordinance; but that either of these is a gospel-ordinance, that Moses's circumcision is the circumcision of Christ, or John's water-baptism is the baptism of Christ, that we conscientiously and groundedly deny; God's Spirit in the Scriptures putting a difference between them, as particularly between John's baptism and Christ's, *Matt. iii. 11.* So that as he greatly mistakes the thing, so (through his mistake) he lamentably wrests and

A Reply to an Answer of some Queries, &c. 641

and misapplies that scripture, *Jude xv.* And let him seriously consider whether that scripture may not justly be applied to them? And whether they can possibly avoid the lash of it without repentance, who deny and revile the inward appearance of Christ, by the light of his Spirit, in the hearts of his in this our day, and deny his inward circumcision and baptism to be the gospel-ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ, setting up John's water-baptism in the stead thereof.

The last Query, *Whether it be not invading, and labouring to make void God's law and commands, when men so slight, contemn, despise, write, and do all they can to keep people from closing in with them, and make them afraid of them by their writing and preaching, as some do?*

Ans. This Query implies a very deep wrong charge against the children and servants of God, for their obedience to God's Spirit. Oh! how will he answer this to God! Because we own Christ's baptism, with the Holy Ghost and fire, and into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, with the water of the fountain which God opens for sin and for uncleanness, and give testimony thereto in the requirings of God's Spirit, having learnt it of him, and experienced it from him, and having a necessity upon us in his name and authority (many times) to testify, That this is the gospel-baptism of Christ our Lord, and that John's water-baptism is not the gospel-baptism, but only a figure, representation, or shadow thereof; therefore this man chargeth us with *invading, and labouring to make void God's law and commands, with slighting, contemning, despising, &c.* Are not these hard words, and a very unjust accusation against God's chosen messengers and servants, and any whom he pleaseth to make use of in this testimony? But the truth is, these hard words are not so much against us, as against him that sends us with this testimony, and is no less than a fighting against him, who will be too hard for you all, and will gather people more and more from the outward water-baptism of John, to the inward baptism by his holy Spirit and fire, which happy are they that know and are baptized with.

He saith at the close, *I have no end in this, but God's glory.*

Ans. But he greatly mistakes the way to glorify God; for to set up the shadow of a thing, instead of the thing itself, is not the way to glorify Christ, or the gospel-dispensation. For Christ is the Son, who doth not come forth with Moses's circumcision, or John's baptism (who were both servants), but with the Spirit and power of his Father, wherewith he circumciseth and baptizeth inwardly and spiritually. And to set up that which is outward in the stead of this, is both to dishonour the Father and the Son.

The CONCLUSION.

NOW, for a close, I shall open a little of the mystery of CHRIST, and of his enlightening, quickening, circumcising, and baptizing, from some scriptures, as the Lord hath pleased to open them in me and to me, and give me the inward sense and experience of them.

John i. 1. and 3. The word was in the beginning, which created all things; and this word is also the beginning of the creation of God in the heart. In this word was life, and the life was the light of men; and this light, which is life in the word, shineth in mens darkness, which enlighteneth them that believe in it, and the life thereof quickeneth and giveth life to them that hear its voice, and believe in it; and both the light and life, or the word by its light and life, circumciseth and baptizeth. Doth not the pure light cut off, chase away, wash away darkness (wherein all sin and uncleanness is comprehended) from the heart? Doth not the pure word of life, received in the faith, purify the heart?

Quest. But where is this word? Or how shall a man come at this word, or bear its voice or commandment, in the obedience whereof he is enlightened, quickened, circumcised, and baptized?

Ans. It is not far off; It is nigh thee, saith Moses. Thou needest not go up to heaven for it, or down to the deep, &c. For God, in his love to man, hath placed it nigher, even in man's mouth and heart, that he might hear it and do it, Deut. xxx. and Rom. x. And he that inclines his ear to this word, hears and obeys it, lives. And as it is the word of the new covenant (in which is the light and life of the new covenant), so it brings him into the new covenant, or makes an everlasting covenant with him, even the sure mercies of David, Isa. lv. 3.

Another scripture is, *1 John i. 1.* where he speaks of the same word, of the same life, and of the same light, wherewith men are enlightened, and wherein they are to walk, *ver. 7.* That which is declared of, that which is to be testified of by the gospel-ministers, is the word, the life, the light. This is the message Christ gave his apostles to preach, *That God is light, ver. 5.* What is the intent of this message, but *that men might be turned from darkness to this light, Acts xxvi. 18.* And then the light enlightens them, and they soon come to feel life, and the word from which the life comes. And so they that truly receive the testimony of the light (which is the gospel-message, *ver. 5.*) they soon come to the manifestation of the life (or of him who is the life) in their own hearts, and so into fellowship with them that are in the light, and with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ also.

A third Scripture is, *2 Cor. iv. 6.* which shews the way of enlightening the mind, which is by God's causing the light of life to shine in the heart; which being believed in, gives the *knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* God is a Spirit; the knowledge of him is spiritual, given and received in the shinings of his light in the heart.

Thus we receive the beginnings of our spiritual knowledge, and thus we receive the increase thereof day by day. In his light (in the shinings of his light in our hearts) we see light at first, and in the further shinings thereof we see more and more light.

The last place I shall mention, is *Matt. xiii. 31.* The kingdom of God was that which Christ much preached, and here he preacheth it as a seed sown

sown in the heart, and that a very little one. Now consider if this be not the word of God in a seed, Christ in a seed, life in a seed, light in a seed, God's seed, (*his seed remaineth in him*, 1 John iii. 9.) Now this seed, as it grows in the heart, grows in its own life, light, nature, Spirit, power, &c., and puts all these forth in the heart in which it grows, against sin, and towards righteousness. Yea, the judgment of God is revealed in the spiritual light, life, and power of this word against sin, and for righteousness; and God's Sion, God's inward, spiritual Sion (or his people and children), is redeemed by the judgment and righteousness which is revealed from and in this word in the heart. And this word is so powerful against sin, that it doth not only cut it off, and wash it away from the mind and conscience, and so make them clean, but it also keeps the mind, in which it remains (as it is regarded and hearkened to), from joining to sin any more; and if sin cannot be joined to, it can neither be conceived nor brought forth, 1 John iii. 9. James iii. 15.

Object. But by this doctrine, or experience (as thou callest it), Christ in his outward appearance, his sacrifice and blood, as also the scriptures, with the exhortations and commands thereof, are all laid waste, and made void, and of no use or effect, all being attributed to this word, life, and light within.

Ans. No, in no wise. This word within, with the life and light thereof, doth not make void any former appearance or ministration of God, but rather establishes them, by owning them in their proper place, use, and service. For he that truly owns this word, light, life, Spirit, power, &c. in his own heart, must also own it in the hearts of others, in Moses, in the prophets, in John, and in its fulness in Christ in the flesh; and the virtue of all it did in Christ, and by Christ in the flesh, towards the salvation of mankind, which his obedience, and the shedding of his blood, was by the Father made absolutely requisite unto. And the scriptures, the instructions, reproofs, exhortations, commands thereof, &c. in the hand of the Spirit, are very useful to this day; and the shinings of Christ, and the quickenings of his life are felt in them, when the Lord manageth them unto the soul for good. Yea, the words that Christ spoke in the days of his flesh, are Spirit and life to this day, when he speaks them in the heart. But they are not life, as men apprehend, understand, or speak them of themselves, but rather death, as so made use of.

And those that thus only learn the words, or practise the words, they do not learn aright, or practise aright; they do not know Christ aright, they do not believe aright, or repent aright; they cannot know Christ as he is the word of life in the heart, nor hear him, nor obey him, nor be circumcised or baptized by him; but are drowned in literal apprehensions and conceptions of their own, beneath him who is the life.

Thus the Jews, in their day, waited for the Messiah, and spake great things of the kingdom of the Messiah, but knew neither him nor his kingdom, when he appeared and preached it. So likewise, many now speak

great things of Christ being come, and of his obedience, death resurrection, ascension, &c. and yet know not him, his voice, his appearance in their own hearts, or in the hearts of others; but think in their obedience to what they apprehend from the scriptures to have eternal life, whilst strangers to the living principle of truth, whereby he gives eternal life to his sheep *that bear his voice, and follow the Lamb of God wheresoever he goes*, and leads along his sheep with him, *John x. 27, 28.*

He that would know God and Christ to salvation, must know them in that mystery of light and life, wherein and whereby they save and deliver from the mystery of sin and death; for there is the mystery of God, the mystery of the Father, the mystery of Christ, the mystery of the gospel, the revelation of the mystery, the preaching of the mystery, the mystery of the kingdom of God, the speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery, the riches of the glory of the mystery, the acknowledgment of the mystery, the fellowship of the mystery, and the mystery of the faith held in a pure conscience. The true ministers of Christ are stewards of the mysteries of God. They have the treasure of life in their earthen vessels, and are to give forth from that treasure to those they minister to, and bring them to the discerning and partaking of the same treasure in themselves.

Oh! consider! consider! all ye professors of Christ, and of the Christian religion! There is a mysterious power that begets, a mysterious womb that conceives and brings forth, a mysterious birth that is begotten and brought forth, which hungers after the mystery, and is fed with the knowledge, life, and virtue of the mystery. That birth which is of a nature below this, or feeds on a knowledge below this, and hath a faith and hope beneath the nature of the faith and hope which God gives to this birth, is but the child or birth of the bond-woman, which is not to inherit with Isaac the true heir; but all such kind of children of the kingdom must be cast out, with the bond-woman their mother, *Matt. viii. 22. Gal. iv. 30.*

The birth of the Father's Spirit and power, is only the true inward Jew or Christian, to which the promises, the kingdom, and everlasting salvation belongs; and all else are but pretenders to be what they are not; who after all the fires of their own kindling, and sparks wherewith they compass themselves about, will at last lie down in sorrow from the hand of the Lord. Oh! that none might be deceived by the enemy of their soul, about matters of so great concern!

Eighteenth of the 5th
Month, 1679.

I. P.

EPISTLES

EPISTLES to FRIENDS.

EPISTLE I.

To FRIENDS in and about the Two Chalfonts.

DEAR FRIENDS,

YE have a deep place in my heart, and my cries are to the Lord for you, that ye may live to him, and find his life springing up and abounding in you. What is it to have a distinct name, or distinct meetings from the world, unless the power of the Lord be felt in your hearts, and his presence in your assemblies? Oh! that the Lord would awaken you! Oh! that the Lord would quicken you! Oh! that it would please the Lord to raise up a strict watch in you, against all drowsiness, and carelessness, and temptations, and snares of the enemy, that ye may travel on your journey, with your backs upon the world, and your faces towards Sion; never looking back to the fleshly nature, desires, or lusts, to entertain any thing of that any more, which ye have parted with in the demonstrations and leading of life, but still pressing on further and further, till ye come to apprehend and be possessed of that, for which ye have been apprehended by God, and drawn in some measure towards.

O my friends! There is a path of life in which ye must travel, even to the very end of it, or the crown of life is not to be received! Oh! that ye might travel on! Oh! that nothing might stop you! Oh! that ye might every day wait for and feel the leader, and walk on with him in the simplicity, uprightness, and sense of his life, out of the reach of that wisdom, which is ever and anon forming reasonings in the heart against it, and striving to darken, and make the plain way of God intricate to the soul!

My life often reacheth to you, my soul exceedingly longeth after you! And in the stirrings of the same life be ye also helpful to me, crying to the Lord for me, that I may abide with him, feel his preservation, and dwell in that which he hath chosen to appear to and refresh the soul in, that I may be acceptable to him, and further helpful to you, in the season of the stirrings

stirrings of his precious and powerful life in my heart. The Lord God of mercy watch over you, pruning and keeping down all the earthliness and corruption in any of you, and watering and cherishing his own plant in you all, that ye may daily witness the dying and decrease of the one, and the quickening and growth of the other, even till death be perfectly consumed and swallowed up by the growth, power, and presence of the immortal life in you, and your souls safe and happy in your God.

And so to the tender mercies and care of the Lord do I give you all up, breatheing for you (as for my own soul) that ye may be perfectly the Lord's, perfectly given unto him, perfectly waiting upon him, and daily receiving into your precious vessels the precious living testimonies of his love and acceptance, and his sweet heavenly dew, which will exceedingly refresh and make your hearts glad, as he causeth them to descend and light upon you. So that which is of God in your hearts every day, wait to feel God breatheing upon, that it may open unto him, receive strength from him, and ye in it be more and more gathered and united to the Lord, even till ye wholly become one nature, mind, and spirit with him; and then ye will see the end of your travels, and sit down in his joy, and peace, and pure rest, from all labouring after life, and all sorrows for the want and absence of it, and all fears of losing or being separated from it; being established in the power which is over all, and which preserveth all that are encompassed with it, and established in it, for ever and ever.

From my present place of Confinement
in Alisbury, according to the will of
God; who is blessed, and to be blessed
in all that he doth, or suffereth to be
done: 22d of the 3d month 1666.

Your friend and brother, in the
meek innocent nature of the
Lamb, and in the beget-
ting of the royal hea-
venly life,

I. P.

Oh! my friends! prize the rich tender mercy of the Lord, in calling you out of this world, towards his everlasting inheritance and fullness of life! And let not any thing of this world come between him and you; but let all that is of this worldly nature, both within and without, be trampled upon by you, and the price of the high calling of our God in Christ Jesus, be faithfully and earnestly pursued after; that none fall short of the hope and glory set before him, but that every one may so run, as certainly to obtain and enjoy for ever, even the dominion and reign of God over all that is contrary to him, and the sitting down in the rest, joy, and peace of his nature for evermore.
Amen.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE II.

To Friends in Truth, in and about the Two Chalfonts.

OH! let every soul wait to feel the pure life of God, that in that we may wrestle with our tender Father, for the opening the depth of his bowels and tender mercy, that that may be brought forth in every vessel, and in the whole body, which may make the glory of his name shine, and may fill the vessels of his choice with the joy and pleasure of his salvation! Oh! that the pure measure of his life might be awakened and raised in your assemblies together, that ye might feel the pure fountain, the springs opening in you, the streams running through you, and every soul refreshed, filled, and satisfied; that ye might go away blessing his name, who hath taught you and given you hearts to wait upon him, and who sheweth you mercy, and giveth you acceptance in your waitings!

And, dear friends! watch, that life may be always fresh and savoury in you, to the seasoning of all your thoughts, words, conversations, and actions, that ye may feel the name of God written upon you, and his precious presence in you, and with you.

And in this freshness remember me, to whom the Lord hath given to remember and breathe for you, who am a prisoner, and have suffered many afflictions, because that of God which is in me cannot bow to that which is of man.

From Aylesbury prison, the 23d of
the Sixth month, 1666.

I. P.

EPISTLE III.To diligent and faithful Friends, in and about the
Two Chalfonts.

O tender and dearly-beloved friends,

MY spirit is at this time touched with the sense of the great goodness and mercy of the Lord, insomuch as I feel breakings forth therein, and repeating there over and over again, Oh! what hath the Lord done for us, what hath the Lord done for us? For he hath not only given

us

us a sense and taste of the precious promises in the scripture, but hath also led us in the way of the fulfilling of them. He hath manifested that to us, wherein not only the promise is made, but whereto also the promise is fulfilled. Which of you, that is open and fresh, doth not know the seed of life, the living principle, the light eternal, which leads out of death and darkness, into the land of the living, the holy land, wherein dwells peace and righteousness, the land which flows with milk and honey, wherein are the vineyards which ye planted not, and the houses that ye built not, wherein the true vine grows, and its branches shoot forth and bear the right grapes? Oh! my friends, do ye not know the Father which begat you, and the Son in whose image he hath begotten you, and his Spirit, which is the breath, strength, and power of your life? How hath the Lord God advanced you, a poor, afflicted, despised, persecuted remnant, above all kindreds, families, and professions of the earth? How nigh is the Lord your God unto you? Doth he not tabernacle and dwell in you? Do ye not feel him walking up and down, and taking delight in your spirits, who are separated from the unclean thing, and to whom subjection to him is become pleasant and natural. Oh! the Lord God give his people a sense what he is unto them in this day, and lead them along into their several possessions and inheritances, that they may sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, each in his portion in the holy land, and in the heavenly dwelling-places in Christ Jesus, which the souls of those that are redeemed by him are acquainted with and sit in.

It is on my heart to instance in some things a little more particularly, that the sense and remembrance of God's goodness to you herein, may come the nearer and closer to your spirits.

First, Have ye not had experience of the Lord's love and faithfulness in manifesting his name unto you, which ye have in some measure known, as pure, precious, and excellent, as a strong tower in case of danger and assaults from the enemy? And hath not the Lord taught you, by a secret instinct of his Spirit and life in you, to retire and hide yourselves in this tower, from the violence and fury of the enemy? And have ye not always found relief, safety, and protection therein? Indeed, when ye have gone out into your own thoughts, and consulted with the reasons of the fleshly mind, there ye have met with a wound and a hurt, and have lain open to the stroke of the betrayer and devourer; but the name of the Lord hath never deceived or disappointed any of you that have trusted in it, relying upon his kindness, tenderness, mercy, love and faithfulness therein.

Secondly, Hath not the Lord given you a proportion of the pure heavenly patience, even of the Lamb's meekness and patience, and also given you to possess your souls therein, wherein hath been felt a true measure of rest and peace with him, in the midst of all the disturbances, fears, and troubles, both within and without? And hath not this been an help and succour to you, even in the time of his judgments, wherein ye have been enabled to

wait.

wait and lie still, until the indignation was over-past, and the mercy sprang afresh?

Thirdly, Hath not God manifested to you the place of his worship, even so that ye know, and have often experienced it to be in his name, Spirit, truth, and power? And hath he not prepared for you, and given to you, the pure offering and sacrifice, and accepted it at your hands? And have ye not often, yea, may I not say always, felt his presence meeting there, and the refreshments which come from his presence in this day of his mercy, and of his tender visiting and refreshing his seed?

Fourthly, Have ye not felt the word of his power shaking the mountains, breaking the rocks, and making the dark hard part in you, and the enemy of your souls, to tremble at the sound of his voice? Yea, have ye not found thereby the stony heart in a great measure taken out of you, and a tender heart, an heart like flesh, given you instead thereof, which hath melted and bowed before the Lord, and tenderly received the impressions of his Spirit?

Fifthly, Have ye not found the laws of life, the laws of the new covenant written by the finger of God's Spirit in this new heart, so that ye could read the will and requirings of your God, by the light of his Spirit in the inner man?

Sixthly, Hath not he also put his Spirit within you, that ye have not only read the law written, but have also found a delight (and ability also in him) to do his will? For the Lord hath not left you to do what he requires, according to the old covenant, but he himself worketh in you both to will and to do what is acceptable to him of his own good pleasure.

Seventhly, Have ye not found his fear put into your hearts, even a fear which no precepts of men can teach, nor ye can by no means attain to, but as he pleaseth to give it you? And doth not this fear make you wise in him to depart from evil? Doth it not cleanse out the evil? Doth it not keep out the evil? Did ye not find this virtue in it at the very first, and do ye not still find it to this very day?

Eighthly, Do ye not find the blotting out of iniquity, and the not remembering of your sins by the Lord? Ah! how hath the Lord forgiven you? How doth the Lord pity you? How doth he bear with you? Do ye not know the place and state wherein mercy pleaseth him, and where he is never weary of pardoning, blotting out, and forgiving? Do ye not feel the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant daily by him upon your consciences, and the precious virtue thereof?

Ninthly, Do ye not find the anointing near you, yea within you, ready to teach you to know the Lord, so that ye indeed know him, not according to outward names and apprehensions only, but his nature in his heavenly power, in his inward virtue, manifestations, operations, and appearances in you? And this is true knowledge indeed, pure knowledge, fresh knowledge, living knowledge, which makes you conformable to, and brings you forth in, the image and likeness of what ye know.

Tenthly, Is not the way of the ransomed, the way of holiness, become clear and pleasant to you? Hath not the Lord removed many stumbling-blocks, that he might make the way plain? And is it not a path wherein there is no erring, wherein a way-farer may walk without fear or danger, the light is so certain, the guide so faithful, and the path so easy and infallible to the plain, honest, single, upright heart, who freely giveth up to the Lord, and waiteth to be taught and led by him? Indeed to the wise, reasoning, disputing mind it is not thus, nor to you at any time when that part is up; but as that is brought down, and the simplicity of Christ (the innocent birth) raised in you, do ye not still feel it thus? Therefore ye had need to watch, and pray, and wait, and believe, that ye may know and enjoy the preciousness of your spiritual estates and conditions in the Lord, and that that which would corrupt and destroy, may (by the lifting up and displaying of the banner of his love and power in you) be beat down and kept out.

Eleventhly, Hath not God given you of the true humility, whereby that which was once exalted in you above his fear and above his seed, is now brought down and laid low, and his pure life and fear in you exalted over it? Do ye not know the feigned humility and fear (which man's wisdom teacheth, and man's wisdom learneth), and abhor them? And is not the true fear and humility which ye have received from God, very precious, and of great use and service to you?

Twelfthly, Have ye not received the true love, whereby ye are taught and enabled to love the Lord your God above all, and the brethren, children, and fathers in him; yea, and your very enemies also. How precious is this! Who can witness this, but he who hath received it! But he whose heart the Lord hath circumcised, and from which he hath cut off the enmity and contentious nature, which cannot truly love neither the Lord nor his people, nor his creatures, though it maketh a subtil deceitful shew thereof, to the deluding both of itself and others.

Thirteenthly, Do ye not know the true righteousness, and the true sanctification which is in Christ Jesus, and which ye receive and abide in in him, which formerly (in a great measure) ye did but talk of, and which many to this day (whom the Lord hath not gathered, as he hath done you, but hath left behind, out of the power, out of the calling, out of the election) have only the words of, and their own apprehensions upon the words, but know not, nor feel, nor enjoy the thing itself, as ye do this day, blessed be the name of your merciful God and Redeemer.

Fourteenthly, Do ye not know Sion, the holy hill of God, and Jerusalem: the holy city which is built thereon, which hath long been hid, even from ages and generations, but now is made manifest in the Spirit, and many are already come thither, and many more are travelling thither-wards, and some dwell and abide therein, and feel the law going forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and find their souls translated

by

by the mighty power of God from death, and hell, and enmity, into the nature, love, and life of the Lamb; in whose light those that are saved and redeemed by him, walk?

Fifteenthly, Do ye not know the true church and body of Christ, which is one spirit with him, which is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones? And hath not the Lord in his mercy made you members thereof? And do ye not feel the nourishment, virtue, life, and Spirit of the whole body in your own vessels, and so are partakers of the true union and fellowship, both with the Lord Jesus Christ, and one with another? For he that is gathered by, and walks in the true light, is also in the true life and fellowship, both with that which begets, and with that which is begotten.

Sixteenthly, Do ye not know the kingdom and reign of Christ already in measure set up, and daily more and more setting up in your hearts? And is not his government sweet, pure, heavenly, precious, refreshing to that which is of God in you, and an iron hammer and scepter to that which is earthly and fleshly. And is it not your joy to feel him reign and overcome his enemies, exalting his holy name, power, and scepter over them? And what he hath done, and what he is doing, and what he yet will do in you, of his own tender love, and for his own name's sake; do not your hearts leap within you, when at any time the Lord pleaseth to give you the sense and sight thereof?

Seventeenthly, Do ye not know the fast which the Lord hath chosen, and hath not the Lord helped you to keep that fast? Have ye not felt his power break the bond of iniquity in you, and the once oppressed in you coming up in a true measure of the pure freedom, to serve and worship the Lord? And have ye not also had a taste of the feast which the Lord hath prepared on his holy mountain, even of the fat things, and wines on the lees well refined, which they that inhabit there eat and drink of abundantly in his presence?

Eighteenthly, Do ye not feel God the Lord making an everlasting covenant with you, even of the love and mercies sure to David and his seed forevermore? Is not he near you, yea with you and in you, who is the gatherer into, and the preserver in, this covenant? Yea, do not ye feel him teaching and enabling you to keep covenant with the Lord your God (by the virtue, power, and presence of his life and Spirit in you), even as he keepeth covenant with you? Insomuch as ye begin to feel a settlement and establishment in him that is true, and your calling and election becoming sure, and the danger and fear of falling away or miscarrying, removing from off your spirits?

What shall I say to you, what shall I mention further, or what shall I instance in? Have ye not felt the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field become a forest? Have ye not felt the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind see, the dumb speak, the leper cleansed, the dead raised, &c. ? Have ye not witnessed the fore shaking, and terrible passing away (in

measure) of the old heavens and old earth, and the forming, planting, and bringing in (in measure) of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, in the stead thereof? So that in places where dragons lay, is now green grass, with sweet-smelling flowers; and in the once parched, dead, dry, barren, desolate heaths, are now springs and flowings of the pure living water?

Friends; There is one, whom the Father hath sealed (and he is but one, yea the very same in us all), in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all the riches and substance of life; and we, through the mercy and goodness of the Lord, partake thereof, as we are gathered into him, found in him, and abide in him.

And now my friends; What hath differenced us from others, or why hath the Lord done this for us more than for others? Search your hearts, see if any of you can find the cause thereof in yourselves. Indeed I cannot. From my very heart I cannot but cry grace, grace! mercy, mercy! love, love (deep, tender love)! goodness, goodness! from the very first beginning, all along, throughout the whole carrying on of the work, to this day; and I have nothing else to hope in, or plead before my God. Do I believe? It is he gave me faith; yea, he putteth it forth, and causeth it to act in me, or I easily fail therein. Do I will that which is good in any kind? My will is of him, yea it is in him, and hath its creation, preservation, being, and strength from him. Do I obey or do that which is good? No, no, not I; but his life, power, and Spirit in me. Do I suffer inwardly or outwardly? That is not of me neither, but he that hath given me to believe, he also giveth me to suffer, and beareth up my spirit in my sufferings, by his power, and for his name's sake. So that my heart saith (and I confidently believe he will, in his mercy and goodness, preserve me in that sense for ever), Not unto me, not unto me, in any one respect, but to thy name, to thy holy name, to thy tender name, to thy infinite bowels, and precious love and compassions in every respect, be the acknowledgment and praise given of what thou hast done, and yet dost, and wilt do in and for my soul, for ever and ever.

And now, my dear friends; As the Lord hath demonstrated the way of life unto you, so that it is sealed in your spirits, and ye have walked in it, and always met with, not only the promises of life, but even life itself therein; so the Lord still watch over you, that nothing ever blind that eye in you, which alone can see this way; and the Lord preserve you in uprightness of heart, that ye may singly wait on him, for his farther manifesting of it in you and to you; and that he, by his living Spirit, would continually quicken and rouse up your spirits, to walk diligently and faithfully therein; that so ye may come to see what ye have not yet seen, and to desire what ye have not desired, and may find your hearts and inheritances enlarged in the Lord. Ah! what is the world, or any worldly thing or interest, in comparison of this! The Lord remove every snare and every
stumbling-

stumbling-block out of your way, and every weight and burthen from off your spirits, that ye may run with joyfulness to the end of your course, and may enter into the full kingdom and possession of life. Ye have received already that which is all; but ye must wait for the farther opening and spreading of it in you, and your farther growth into it. The Lord's soul hath travailed for you, and his faithful messengers have likewise travailed and sought after your souls, and your souls have travailed, and mourned, and waited, and gone through temptations and trials of many kinds, and had a taste of the true peace, the true holiness, the true righteousness, the true joy, even the joy of the everlasting kingdom. Now the Lord God preserve you, that nothing may interrupt or come between you and that, wherein ye have felt him, and wherein is his riches and fulness; but that ye may always feel that, and abide faithful to the Lord in that, wherein the preservation and growth unto life eternal alone is witnessed.

And friends; Put the Lord in mind, that as he hath pleased to manifest the way, and shew that clearly unto you, whereby the heart is joined to him and preserved in him; so he would please, of his free and tender mercy, to add this also, even to give upright hearts and entire spirits, to abide with him in that principle of life wherein he hath gathered you, and to watch unto, and be faithful to, all his warnings, drawings, movings, and leadings, that his Spirit may have no matter of grief against you, but it may be the delight of his soul to do you good continually, and to answer the desire of your souls in every thing that ye breathe unto him for; that the Lord may not be ashamed to own you to be his people, and ye may feel with joy, and abundant consolation, that he is your God. And this will be enough in all the tribulations, afflictions, and trials that ye meet with, either inwardly or outwardly. So the God of love and peace preserve you, in that wherein is fellowship with him, and in which his life, love, joy, and peace naturally and delightfully spring up, and flow into the soul.

Amen, Amen.

Written in Aylesbury goal, about
the Ninth and Tenth of the
Twelfth Month, 1666.

I P.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE IV.

For Friends of our MEETING, and thereabouts.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I AM deeply sensible that it is a day of trouble, rebuke, and distress, to the Israel of God. The Lord hath pitched his pure, living tent, and begun to build up his beloved city; the Lord hath indeed had mercy upon Sion, and favoured the ruins and desolations thereof. But the malice and rage of the enemy is great, who seeketh to compass the tent of the holy and the beloved city, that he may lay waste and destroy the work and heritage of God. Now all that feel life, all that are of the true birth, all that know the seed; oh! abide, live, and breathe in the seed, that ye may come forth in the true life, and in the strength of God's holy Spirit (with strong cries and tears, with innocency and righteousness, with meekness and patience, &c.), to the help of the Lord against the mighty. We have no strength but our God, nor is our expectation from man (whose breath is in his nostrils, who is to be ceased from); but we believe the voice, that not by strength, nor by man's power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts, shall this work of his be preserved and go on. Therefore every one wait to feel the seed travail and cry daily to the Father, that so the spirit of darkness may be hindered, and by the power of life withstood, in all its enterprises against the children of light. Oh! let the condition of Jerusalem be written upon every one's heart; and as members of the living body, feel the wants, afflictions, and distresses of your fellow-members day by day. And let every one say in spirit;

Lord, take care of all thy children. Oh! thou tender Father, consider what they suffer for the testimony of thy truth, and for thy name's sake, and uphold them, and give them victory, and an holy dominion over all, because it belongs to thy seed into which thou hast gathered them, and in which thou hast united them to thyself. Oh! carry on thy glorious work, which thy own mighty arm hath begun, and cut it short in righteousness for thine Elect's sake, that it may be finished by thee, to thine own everlasting praise. Thy children wait on thee, they cry to thee day and night, that they may be preserved by thee in the well-doing, and in the pure, holy, innocent sufferings for thy truth's sake; until thou say, It is enough, until thy holy Spirit say, It is finished: my lambs, ye shall suffer no more, but now ye shall reign with me and my Son for ever.

My dear friends, it is now the time of prayer, and of waiting upon, and hoping in, the Lord, who knoweth and considereth all our conditions. If any be afflicted, let him pray. We are afflicted, we are oppressed without cause

cause or provocation on our parts, only because we fear, and love, and obey our God, according as he hath taught us, and because he hath put this resolution into our hearts, that we will abide in subjection to him, and stand to the holy testimony which he hath given us to bear, whatever befalls us. And what shall separate us from his love, or come between us and his care over us, who is able to bear us up in all, and carry us over all (in the holy dominion and strength of his seed) that can set upon us, and strive to turn us out of the way, or to make us faint in the way?

Dear friends, In my bonds I remember you, and pray for your prosperity. Do ye also remember me in your daily addresses and approaches to God, that I may receive increase of virtue and strength from the Lord, by the help of your prayers; and, oh! feel the afflictions of the afflicted, and breathe for them day by day, that the whole body may receive the flowings in of life, help, and strength daily, from the pure breathings of life in every member of the body every day.

So the God of love and mercies be with, and do good to, his whole heritage; and fill you (with the rest of his children) from the pure fountain of life, with fresh streams of life day by day, *Amen*. This is the hearty desire of

Reading Goal, the 9th
of the Sixth Month,
1670.

Your friend, brother, and companion in the
faith and patience of the saints, who have
had a share in the afflictions which be-
fall his children and chosen ones,
for his name's sake,

I. P.

And truly friends, it is not grievous, but rather joy to me, to undergo the several afflictions and temptations, which my tender Father, in his tender love and good-will, orders for me. Yea; all that can taste, tell me, is it not greater riches, and far sweeter, in this our day, to bear the reproach of Christ, and to suffer for the testimony of his precious truth, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin and glory of this world, which are but for a season?

EPISTLE

EPISTLE V.

To Friends in Truth, in Chalfont, and thereabouts.

Dear friends (whom I love in the Lord, and whose prosperity and growth in the truth I greatly desire), this sense is on my heart, in reference to you at this time.

THE Lord's soul travaileth for you (having visited you in tender mercy, and with great loving-kindness, and he desireth to enjoy and possess you, as an inheritance for himself, to delight in and to do good unto continually; and I know there are many among you, who have also desired and travailed after the Lord, and have been burthened and grieved with that which hath in any measure hindered your souls enjoying the Lord, and your faithful serving him, and his delight and pleasure in you. Now friends, this is my present desire and breatheing for you, even that ye may be joined further and closer in the everlasting covenant of life and peace with the Lord, which must never be forgotten on your parts, as it cannot be on his; wherein to help all the tender and faithful-hearted among you, this advice sprang in my heart to you this morning.

Mind and watch to that which quickens and enlivens the soul towards God, and watch against that which flats and deadens it; for they are both near, and they both seek after you, the one for your good, the other for your hurt. I need not tell you what these are, nor where or how they appear (ye have been abundantly, and as ye wait on the Lord, are daily instructed therein, blessed be the name of the Lord), but in continual watching to the one, and against the other, is the diligence and care of your spirits daily to be exercised. Oh! at no time let your spirits be loose and careless! For the enemy waits to do hurt, and the Lord waits to be gracious, and to do your souls good. Watch, therefore, and pray, that ye enter not into the temptation of the enemy, nor miss of the tender mercies and loving-kindnesses of the Lord, which are sure to the seed (and to all that are of and abide in the seed) for ever.

Oh! who would miss of the quickening virtue of our God, of being anointed with his holy oil, and of having the flames of life kindled further in him? Who would be captivated and brought into subjection to sin, Satan, vanity, and the spirit of this world again, who hath witnessed any proportion of deliverance there from? Ye know that ye can do nothing of yourselves: Oh! what need have such to watch to that, which is able to work mightily in the heart, and to bring forth the fruits and effects of righteousness,

righteousness, and to bring under, and keep under, kill and slay that power of unrighteousness, and to root out and bury the dead, out of the sight and remembrance of the living. Glorious things are testified (truly testified) concerning the power of the Lord, and his mighty operation inwardly in the hearts of his children, in this day of the preaching of the everlasting gospel again, after the long night of darkness. Let none be content, without witnessing and experiencing a measure thereof in their own particular. Oh! dwell not with death, vanity, nor corruption! Oh! my dear friends, let not vain or earthly thoughts lodge in any of your hearts! but dwell with him who is pure, who is living, and gives life to your souls; and also gives peace, and brings it home to you, leaving upon your spirits that *peace which passeth all the understanding* and comprehension of man, and who maketh his called, chosen, and faithful ones glad with his deliverance from the power and temptation of the enemy, and with the flowings in of life and redeeming virtue, from the fountain thereof. Judea (the city) is known among the living, *whose walls are salvation, and all the gates and entrance into it praise.*

And, my dear friends, mind your meetings together, to wait upon your God with great seriousness and intention of spirit, every one watching to feel life up in your own spirits. Oh! sit down (yea, breathe earnestly to the Lord to give you to sit down) in the silence of flesh, and in the stillness of your spirits, waiting for the presence, appearance, and power of your God to be revealed in the midst of you, that your hearts may be searched more and more, and the pure judgment revealed against whatever would appear or rise up contrary to the holy nature and will of God, and that which is for death, brought into death more and more, and so the bread and water of life given to that which is to be nourished up in life, that all that is impure may be kept down, and that which is pure (the plants and trees of righteousness) may thrive, flourish, and spread more and more, and you sit down under the shadow of your own vine and olive-tree, partaking of the sap and fatness thereof.

Oh! that every one of you, in all your meetings together, might witness that scripture fulfilled in you; *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt give them, or make them to drink, of the rivers of thy pleasure.*

And I beseech you, in the bowels of tender love, take heed of sluggishness, or carelessness, or deadness of spirit in your meetings; these things in no-wise become the Lord's people, nor your professions of waiting upon the living God; ye are to look up, to watch, wait, and breathe for the Lord, to be exercised by his Spirit, to have to do with him before whom all things are naked and bare, to offer up that acceptable sacrifice of a broken heart, of pure praises, of love, life, humility, thanksgiving, &c. and to receive what the Father of mercies stands ready (in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of his love) to give forth unto you. Can you

be thus exercised, while in a drowsy, sluggish, careless spirit? Do not such dishonour the Lord, whose name ye should honour? And is not the jealous God provoked and grieved by such things as these, whom ye should walk in all humility, tenderness of spirit, and well-pleasingness before?

I beseech you, therefore, watch against all things of this nature, and be diligent, that ye may witness the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus making you free, and fencing you against all things of this kind, that ye may be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, a temple of living stones, wherein the living God may dwell and walk, and sup with you, and give unto you to sup with him, where ye shall eat the pure bread of life, and drink the wine of the kingdom, which will gladden your hearts exceedingly, and the joy of the Lord will become your strength; which strength will carry you above the strength of the enemy, and cause you to bring forth the fruits of life, and righteousness, naturally to the Lord; and so you shall shine as lights in your several places, and shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; for it is a marvellous light indeed, which the Lord hath caused to shine in the spirits of his children, whom in this day of his power he hath begotten to himself, and the life eternal is wrapped up in it; and they that truly know it, know it to be no less than the light of life, even the light which came from the pure life of the Son, and leads to the habitation and dwelling-place of the Father.

There is one thing yet remains with me, which I would fain have you grow in a true, sensible, and experimental understanding of, which is this; to wit, What it is, not to touch the unclean thing. The enemy will be stirring up and casting in that which is unclean, upon the vessels which God is purifying and preserving from all pollution. But there is a starting back from, and eschewing the evil, a forsaking of the vain earthly mind and thoughts, and a receiving in such temptations and suggestions no more. Oh! that ye might all experimentally know and witness what this is! I know many of you do in some measure, blessed be the God of our mercies, blessed be our Saviour and Redeemer, for ever and ever! But oh! more, more, more of this knowledge, more of this experience, my heart livingly breathes for, for myself and you, that we may witness the scripture abundantly fulfilled in our hearts from the Lord: *Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* Oh! feel the weight of this scripture, in that which gives the understanding of it! The Lord hath made a new covenant, and a living covenant, and prepared a new and living way for the ransomed to walk in without erring, that he might amend all (in this new people) which was amiss in those under the first covenant.

Oh! let the Lord enjoy the design of his heart, and his people so wait upon him, that they may all be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and the Lord may have a generation of Calebs and Joshuas, who may fully follow

follow after him in all things, and who may witness his power and presence still with them, and the holy, tender, merciful God may never be provoked by them, to cause him to withdraw his good Spirit from them, and so to leave them and forsake them; for if any draw back from the Lord, and from the holy commandment of life, the Lord's soul can have no pleasure in such. Oh! that, therefore, there may be none among you drawing back to perdition! and take heed of deadness, drowsiness, sluggishness of spirit, earthliness, fleshly wisdom, unbelief, &c. for that is a degree thereof, and leadeth thitherwards), but all to grow in faith, with diligence, towards the saving of your souls (which is far nearer than when you first believed), which ye shall be sure in due time to reap even the salvation ye wait for, if ye faint not, nor grow weary in your minds, but abide in the faith and patience, unto the end of your trials, both inward and outward, which are measured out by the Spirit and wisdom of the Lord, and not by the wiles of your enemies, whom the Lord stops and chains at his pleasure.

The grace, mercy, love, and peace of God our Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied unto you, and fill your hearts from day to day, according to your several capacities, and enlarge your capacities, and bring you more and more into the heavenly fellowship, that your joy therein may abound, and ye may daily rejoice in the goodness of the Lord, and in his exercising loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

Reading Goal, the 22d
of the Third Month,
1671.

This is from your brother and companion
in the afflictions, and also in the joy and
glory of this day of the salvation of
our God, which is further to be re-
vealed and enjoyed by those who
meekly and patiently wait
for it,

I. P.

And all my dear friends, who have known what it is to be uncovered and stripped of your own righteousness (and of all fleshly robes and garments), and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, even the innocency and righteousness of his nature and Spirit, and so to appear before the Lord, and walk with him in the garment which he puts upon you; oh! friends, keep this garment about you, that ye be not stripped and robbed of that wherewith God once clothed you, and so your nakedness appear, and men see your shame; and instead of being an honour, ye become (any of you) a reproach to the name and truth of the Lord, which is very honourable, and should be honoured in and by us all.

P p p p 2

The

The direction of this in my heart, was to friends in truth, in Chalfont, and thereaways, among whom my heart hath been greatly comforted and refreshed, who (some of you) had some knowledge of my former great misery and distress, for want of the power and presence of the Lord, and are now witnesses with me of his tender mercy and great salvation; glory to him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb whose kingdom is exalted over all, who already reigns in righteousness in the hearts of a remnant; who sit down, and find rest and peace, and true joy of heart, soul, and spirit, under the shadow of his government, and cannot but sing and sound forth praises, pure praises, honour, and dominion, and strength, to the name and arm which hath done the valiant acts, bringing sin, corruption, death, and the grave under, and bringing life and immortality to rule and have dominion over it; so that he that is pure power and life, is felt tabernacling and living in his people, and he gives unto them to live in, and through, and with him; and they cannot but sound praises to the power and glory of his life from day to day; glory in the highest to our God, and to his Christ, for ever and ever, *Amen, Hallelujah.*

S O M E
Q U E R I E S
C O N C E R N I N G
C O M P U L S I O N i n R E L I G I O N.

Query 1. **W**HETHER every man ought not to endeavour to be fully persuaded in his own soul concerning the religion and worship which he performs and offers up to God?

Query 2. Whether, when a man is fully persuaded concerning the religion and worship he ought to perform to God, whether he is not then bound in conscience so to worship and serve God, as he is fully persuaded in his own soul?

Query 3. Whether, if a man should leave that way of religion and worship, whereof he is fully persuaded in his own soul, and should worship according to the law and worship of the country wherein he lives, whether this would be accepted of the Lord, and whether his soul would not be in danger of the displeasure and wrath of the Lord therefore?

Query

Query 4. Whether God hath given any man or men power, by laws and penalties, to compel men to worship him contrary to the belief of their hearts and the full persuasions of their souls? Is it not written, that whatsoever is not of faith is sin? And hath God given any men power and authority to compel others to sin? Surely the end of magistracy is to restrain men from sin, and not to compel men to sin.

Query 5. Whether under the law of Moses, the worship was not first made manifestly clear to mens hearts and consciences, and they fully persuaded thereof; before they suffered any penalties annexed for failing in it, or turning aside from it?

Query 6. Whether under the gospel, Christ or his apostles did ever compel any by outward force to their way of worship, or give any rule for compulsion after their days. Did not they say, they were not lords over mens faith, but that there was one Lord and Master, even Christ, to whom every man was to give an account? Now if men should commend us for worshipping as they teach us, and by laws require of us contrary to the belief and full persuasion of our own souls, and Christ condemn and punish us therefore, would it not go hard with us?

Query 7. Was it not the beast that compelled men to worship, and is he not branded therefore, *Rev. xiii.*? But could he by his laws and penalties compel any, whose names were written in the book of life, to his worship? others indeed he did compel, and cause to worship, as may be seen in that chapter.

Query 8. Is not Christ's kingdom spiritual? Are not the weapons of his warfare spiritual? Are they not mighty through God, to convince and establish men in the truth, and in the way of the gospel-worship? Would Christ have any people forced by outward compulsion, to serve or worship him? Whosoever will, let him come, saith he; and his people are a willing people, and God loveth a chearful giver and a chearful worshipper. Is not compulsion a great argument against that church and ministry that useth it, that they want the spiritual weapons? That they want the authority and power of the true church and ministry, and so are fain to seek to supply it by the authority and power of Man? For that which is of man, if it were not held up by man, would fall; but the truth will grow and increase, and that which is of God will stand and out-live all the violence and oppositions of men. And one thing is worthy of very serious consideration concerning this worship, which there is such striving to compel men to, which is this; what kind of persons they are that dissent from it, and what they are, for the generality, that so cry it up. Are not many of them very loose, prophane, swearers, cursers, excessive drinkers, yea some of them Atheists? Is there not a ground of jealousy at least, if not a strong argument, against that worship and way of religion which pleaseth these?

Can that which came from God, and is of God, please corrupt man? And who are they that dissent from, and dare not practise it? Are they not

men of tender consciences, and that fear to offend the Lord, and who seek after that religion and worship, wherein there is truth, life, virtue, and power? Now which of these are likeliest to know the truth, and to be taught of the Lord the true worship.

Oh! that these things were seriously considered of; for though men were wicked and prophane themselves, yet if they did not oppose that which is good, but could suffer others quietly to serve and fear the Lord, neither their sin nor danger would be so great.

Reading Goal, 19th of the
7th Month, 1670.

I. P.

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God, now he that is just and ruleth in the fear of God, cannot afflict or punish any for fearing God, or for worship which they perform to him in his fear. Shall not he that made the world, be worshipped by his children and servants, according as he requires of them? But shall the authorities of this world oppose him therein, and with all their might stop and hinder (as much as in them lies) his children and servants from obeying him? Now the Lord God of heaven and earth (who is above all, and hath power over all) knoweth, that not in opposition to authority, but in the fear of his name, do we (who are called *QUAKERS*) meet together to worship him as he hath required of us; and that if we should not so do, we should sin against him, and be guilty of rebellion against the King of kings, who is able to save and destroy body and soul for ever. And in this case it is that Christ hath bid us not fear him that can kill the body, and can go no further, but rather to fear him who can kill both body and soul, and cast them into hell.

Oh! that the magistrates of this nation were just, ruling in the fear of God! could they then afflict those that fear him as they do, even such as are taught by him to love and pray for their enemies? Is not there work enough for the magistrates sword against manifest wicked men, but it must still be turned against those that fear the Lord? Will ye provoke the Lord to the utmost? Are ye stronger than he? Will ye put it to the proof, whether he be able to deliver his people or no? Remember, the nations are but as the drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance before him? What then is the wisdom and strength of one, two, three, or four nations, to his wisdom and strength?

This is written in our hearts, that God is to have his due, as well as Cæsar his; and that God is to have his due in the first place, but Cæsar after God, and in subjection to God. But if there be an absolute necessity

cessity put upon us by men (which they ought not to do), either of disobeying God or Cæsar, we do really believe that question of some of the apostles, in this case, to be very weighty, and worthy to be duly considered, *Acts* iv. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye (for we cannot but obey the Lord our God in what he hath required and doth require of us). And truly if we should so do, great and dreadful woe would be upon our souls, and we should lose the enjoyment of God's presence, and the peace which passeth all understanding; which we cannot but value above our estates, liberties, or whatever outward thing we can enjoy or possess in this world, even above our very lives; yea, it were far better for every one of us to lose our lives in our faithful testimony to the true worship of God in Spirit and truth, which he hath taught us, and required us to practise and give our testimony to, than to be found unfaithful and disobedient to him herein.

Reading Goal, the 12th of the
7th Month, 1670.

L. P.

CONCERNING

Difficulties of the Gospel

7 AP 59

CONCERNING THE

Dispensation of the GOSPEL,

OR THE

Dispensation of the SON in SPIRIT,

WHICH IS THE

LAST DISPENSATION,

WHEREBY THE

MYSTERY of GOD, the MYSTERY of the
Work of Redemption, is finished in the Heart, all
created anew inwardly, all subdued that is contrary
to GOD, the Soul brought into, or translated into,
the Everlasting Kingdom, and the Kingdom at length
delivered up to the FATHER, and GOD becomes All
in All; where all Names cease, and the Pure Eternal
Being is known, united to, and lived in, after an un-
utterable Manner.

CONCERNING THE

 DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL, &c.

TO know the Father (even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) as the fountain or original spring of light, life, love, wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, and all spiritual and heavenly blessings:

To know the Son as the way to the Father, as the way to life, peace, and blessedness in the Father:

To know the Son's Spirit, and the Father's also, whereby the Father draws to the Son, and the Son brings to the Father; whereby the Son quickens, begets, renews, sanctifies, destroys, cuts down, burns up that which is drossy, corrupt, and chaffy; yea, not only the fruits of sin, but the very root itself, yea the very earth in which the root grows, and the heavens that water the earth are consumed and pass away inwardly, and a new heaven and a new earth is inwardly planted and formed, wherein dwells righteousness; so that the cage of unclean birds, the place where the dragons lay, is shaken and removed, and the place of the wicked inwardly known no more; but instead thereof there are new heavens and earth, even of the new creation of God; which earth brings forth the increase of life; the fruits of life, the seeds and trees of righteousness, of God's sowing, planting, grafting, pruning, and causing to grow, that he may be glorified: I say,

Thus to know the Father, thus to know the Son, thus to know the Holy Spirit of light, life, love, and righteousness, &c. not notionally in the brain, or with a comprehensive knowledge of the mind, but livingly in the heart, in the light that shines from the Father and Son, in the life that springs from them, in the love which is of them (for, indeed, it is love that gives the bright, purely sensible and uniting knowledge): this is precious knowledge; and all knowledge of the very same things, any otherwise than as coming from, and held in, this springing life, is of no comparison with the excellency (for nature and virtue) of this kind of knowledge.

Now there have been two great dispensations of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The one figurative, the other substantial. The one called the law, the

Concerning the Dispensation of the Gospel. 667

the other the gospel. For under the law the Father was made known, the Son made known, the Spirit made known; but all in figures and outward ways of manifestation. God was to that people of the Jews a fountain of living waters; and when they forsook him, and trusted in lying vanities, they forsook the fountain of their own mercies. They then forsook the fountain of living waters, digging to themselves broken cisterns that could hold no water.

So the Son was made known under the types and figures of the law, as the King of righteousness, as the high-priest of God, as the prophet that God would raise up, as the spiritual rock which yielded the spiritual waters, of which the soul was to drink. And they that were a-thirst were to come to him and buy wine and milk of him, and incline their ear to him, that they might hear and live, and he would make an everlasting covenant with them, even the sure mercies of David.

So the Spirit of God, which was typified under a pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, did strive with man before the law, and was given to the Jews to instruct them, and to plough up their fallow ground, and circumcise them inwardly, and to wash their hearts from wickedness and vain thoughts, that they might not lodge in them.

But all this was not properly (in the Spirit and power of it) the dispensation of the law; but hid in a mystery, and running under-ground, as I may so say. This was from another covenant, and part of another covenant than the covenant of the law, though in the time of the law. For there was another covenant which Moses declared of, besides the covenant of the law made in Horeb, which was the word of life, or word of faith in the mouth and heart, which teacheth the substance of the law, and also gives power to fulfill the righteousness of the law, to them that hear and receive its voice, in the faith which it gives or begets. And so the Father of spirits was known in the time of the law. Christ the redeemer was known to live, yea to live in the heart in the time of the law. The free Spirit, the Spirit of love was received, and the presence of God felt and enjoyed by God's Calebs, Joshuahs, and Davids (by men after God's own heart) in the time of the law. Moses had his meekness and tenderness, and was made faithful in all God's house by the Spirit of Christ, this meek lamb-like Spirit.

Now when the shadows came to an end, Christ the substance was to come. The everlasting King, the everlasting high-priest, the everlasting prophet was to appear. The everlasting rock and holy builder was to appear, and raise up David's tabernacle in Spirit, and minister in the true sanctuary, by his light, by his life, by his power, by his righteous Spirit. There is not another tabernacle to be built, not another temple, not another Jerusalem than the heavenly Jerusalem, not another Mount Sion to be known or come to, than the gospel Mount Sion; not another God, than God the judge of all in the gospel-state; not another word or law of life,

668 *Concerning the Dispensation of the Gospel*

than the law which goeth forth out of Sion, and the word that issueth out from this heavenly Jerusalem; not another water to wash the soul with, not another blood to sprinkle the conscience with, not another spirit to enlighten, quicken, keep alive, and comfort, than the Spirit of light, life, and love from God, which reconciles unto God, and brings into the gospel-righteousness, rest, and peace, and establisheth the soul therein.

So now, feeling the Spirit of the Son, and being led by him to the Father, and the Father with the Son, by the Holy Spirit, creating me anew, enlightening me, quickening me, raising me in life, circumcising my heart to love, I am come to life, and at rest in him that lives in me, and works in me, and gives me to live, and work, and rest in him. For there are the sabbath-day's works, even works of love, works of life, works of righteousness and holiness, works that the Lord works in the souls in whom he dwells and rests, and which they in the pure rest, peace, and joy of life, work in the Lord their God, who works all their works in them and for them.

Now in this gospel-dispensation, or in this dispensation of the Son in Spirit, all other dispensations are gathered and wrapped up, and thoroughly experienced by the soul that travels with and is led by Christ, in this his gospel-dispensation.

As first, There is Moses in Spirit known and travelled through. There is the ministration of the law in the Spirit inwardly commanding known, heard, felt, received, before the gospel-power is given to perform. And here is hard travel and sore exercises. Here the Father is known commanding, and the soul consents and would fain obey, but finds the law in the members rebelling against the law which the mind hath a sense of, and desires after.

Then afterwards comes the dispensation of the prophets, wherein there are prophecies of a better state to come, openings of the mercy and love which is to be manifested in the latter days, at the end of these trials and exercises, wherein the soul hath promises from God, that the righteousness shall be revealed, that power to become a son shall be given, and the enemy's strength broken, and the bowed down soul raised up from under his oppression, and the Lord shall tread him under the feet of the poor and needy, and the hungry and thirsty shall be filled with righteousness, and the meek come to inherit God's earth, and the beggar come from the dung-hill, be raised up in the power of life, to sit among princes, even the princes in the heavenly glory of God's everlasting kingdom.

After this succeeds John's ministry in Spirit, even the levelling the mountains, the raising up the vallies, the preparing the way for the King of glory, that he may come in and reveal his glory inwardly. For not in the time of the law inwardly, nor in the time of the prophecies inwardly; but after the soul is exercised and prepared inwardly (that being wasted which hindered, that raised up which lay low, that made straight which lay crooked, that

Concerning the Dispensation of the Gospel. 669

that made plain that was rough, and so the way is prepared and fitted for the great appearance of the great God and Saviour, in the pure, bright gospel glory, Spirit, and power); doth the King come suddenly into his temple; not when the foundation is laid, but when Sion is built up, doth God appear in his glory therein. Read *Isa.* xl. 3, 4, 5. and consider. After John's coming in a body of flesh, and preparing the way by his outward ministry, Christ came in a body of flesh, and was revealed as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, by the life, Spirit, and power that that body was filled with. And after John comes in Spirit, and prepares the way in any heart, by the mighty and effectual operation of his ministry there, then Christ comes after him in Spirit, in the great power and glory of the Father, and the Father is revealed, and the Son also in the Spirit of light, life, love, and righteousness, and the glory of the Lord is beheld with open face, in the glass of life and righteousness, and the soul is changed into the same image, and partakes of the heavenly glory, and is married or joined to the Lord, to become one spirit with him, and hath fellowship with the Father and the Son in the light of life; and this is the gospel-state and glory, and there is not another.

Now take one scripture more which sums up all dispensations, and sets up the dispensation of the Son in Spirit as the last, as the dispensation of the last days. It is *Heb.* i. 1. read but what things are spoken of to be brought to pass in the last days of the great gospel-glory, to be revealed then of the perfect redeeming to God, and centering in him, of being married to him, and becoming one with him, &c. and of the Son's being the minister in the gospel-state, by the Spirit and power of the endless life, to bring it all forth, and accomplish it in the husbandry and building of God. Consider the place; at sundry times, and in divers manners, God spake in times past by Moses, by the prophets, by John; but now the last days are come, now the last dispensation is come, now the covenant wherein God himself is the teacher, is come, now the time of building the Sion, the Jerusalem, wherein God himself will dwell for ever, is come; now the light of the city of God is come, which is an eternal light, an unchangeable light. Now the Spirit of love, which brings up the gospel-life, is come, and edifies the holy gospel-building, in the gospel-love and life. Oh! the light, oh! the life, oh! the love, oh! the righteousness, oh! the divine nature, which is now revealed and partook of in the Son! He is the brightness of the Father's glory; and thither he brings his. What would ye have more? He destroys antichrist inwardly, by the brightness of his coming or appearing. Oh! the desolations that he makes inwardly of sin and iniquity in the hearts of his! He is the express image (or engraving) of his Father's substance; and he makes thee, who art one with him in his Spirit of life and love, of the same image with him. He translateth thee out of Satan's image, into his very image. His light, his life, his love, his righteousness, his divine nature, doth not wax old as a garment, but endure

endure and remain the same for ever. He is Alpha and Omega. There was nothing before him, nor shall be after him. There is no other thing appertaining to life and godliness, but what he now dispenseth in the gospel; no other kingdom but what stands in the power of the life and righteousness, which is now revealed in the peace, love, and joy of the Spirit. The gospel-building is his house; and he is faithful in all his house, as a Son, having received all power from his Father, to gather fully, to preserve fully, to build up fully, to leaven fully with life and righteousness, even in soul, body, and spirit, to lead into the Holy Land, and to enable to keep the holy sabbath there, even to cease from sin, and every thing that burdens the life, and to rest in God, and not work any thing of ourselves any more, but to feel the Spirit of life, love, and power work in us. And his yoke of life, his yoke of love, his yoke of the power, is the pure gospel-liberty comprehended in. The Lord Jesus did appear in flesh; but now he appears in Spirit, and is Spirit, giving himself to be life and Spirit in his. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and every thing which is of a fleshly nature, which deceiveth and imbondageth, wherein the pure liberty is not, he discovereth, and keepeth his out of, that so they may stand fast in the pure liberty of the light, life, and love of his Holy Spirit, wherewith he maketh his free.

The Eighteenth of the
9th Month, 1678.

I. P.

S O M E

E X P E R I E N C E S,

Which it hath pleased the LORD to give me, concerning his Way, his Truth, his Church and People, against whom the Gates of Hell cannot prevail.

First, **I**T hath pleased the Lord to manifest to me, that there is a light wherewith he (in his tender mercy, love, and good-will) enlighteneth mankind. This light I have found my own soul enlightened with, even from my very childhood, though I never took notice of it to be what it is, till the Lord manifested it to me. But ever since it pleased the Lord

to

to manifest it to me, and to turn my mind to it, I have found it to shine inwardly in my heart, even as the outward light of the sun shineth outwardly to the outward eye.

Secondly, By this light it hath pleased the Lord to give me the distinction of things inwardly in my own heart. The Lord hath shewn me by it evil and good in my own heart, and taught me to chuse the good, and refuse the evil. So that as my eye hath been turned to this light, and kept to this light, I have known and walked in the way of life; for the power which hath appeared in this light, hath created me anew, made me a child of light, and taught and caused me to walk in this light, as God is in the light. And in this light I have experienced fellowship with the Father who is light, and with his Son who is light also, and with all the children of light.

Thirdly, In this light (being gathered out of darkness into it, and abiding in it) I have had remission of sins. For no sin is laid to the charge of any soul that abides in this light, but only to such as continue in darkness, or go out from it into darkness. This I have had the constant experience of from my first distinct knowledge of God's truth; for I never found, at any time, any condemnation, while I abode in the pure light of God's Holy Spirit, and blessed witness; but if at any time I hearkened to the enemy, the prince of darkness, and went by his allurements into darkness, I still met with condemnation there.

Fourthly, In this light I have received power to become a Son to God. Oh! it is unutterable to relate what power is here received against the soul's enemies, and to do the will of God! Indeed, in the light there is power; yea, full power, suitable to every soul's condition. There needs no more power (no not to the highest condition) than what is laid up, and to be received in this light. All the power of darkness is communicated in the darkness, to the children of darkness; and all the power of light is communicated in the light, to the children of light. In the light there is an holy will and ability given daily more and more, and the unholy will and ability (which troubleth the holy seed) removed out of the way.

Fifthly, In this light I know the true church, the holy gathering by the gospel-spirit and power; for none are the true church in the gospel-days but such. The law-church was a company of Jews after the flesh, circumcised in flesh, to keep the outward law of commandments; but the gospel-church is a company of believers after the Spirit, circumcised in Spirit, to keep the inward law, even the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes free from the law of sin and death. So that all the gospel-church are children of the true woman, growing up in the holy liberty from the bondage of sin and corruption, unto the royal law of holiness and righteousness. So that being in the light, I see the children of light, and know that the holy gathering, even the gospel-church, are such, and that none else can be of the gospel-church, having (out of the light) nothing

of the nature of the gospel-church or Spirit in them. Ye may as well make a man without the nature of a man, as a Christian without the nature of a Christian. He was not a Jew outward under the law, without the nature of a Jew outward; nor is he a Jew inward under the gospel, without the nature of a Jew inward. And as the law-church consisted of Jews outward, so the gospel-church consists of Jews inward; which are children of light, and not of darkness, and can be known only by them who are in the true light. So that the Lord having mercifully gathered me into his gospel-light, these things (in his gospel-light) have been clearly seen by me.

Sixthly, In this light I know the gospel-worship, the worship which lies not in the darkness of man's apprehensions, but in the light which shines from God in the heart. For the children of God are taught in the light, know God their Father in his own pure light, and worship in the light, wherein they are taught by him to know him. They worship in the truth. They are led by the Spirit of light and truth, out of darkness, out of deceit, out of all kind of error and unrighteousness; and they worship in truth, and in the Spirit, into which they are led, and in which there is no deceit nor error. They gather together in the Son's name (in his living name, oh! wait to understand that!). And there the Son is in the midst of them, and his life and Spirit intercedes in them; and in his name they offer up the righteous sacrifices, the holy sacrifices of life, and the pure incense, in which the Father is greatly delighted, and smells a sweet smell and favour of rest.

Seventhly, In this light I have experienced the good conscience, even the conscience which answers to truth, and will not answer to unrighteousness. Indeed in this light I have felt my heart sprinkled from an evil conscience (I testify it in deep humility of spirit, and in great thankfulness towards the Lord). The darkness defiles and stains; but in the pure light the heart is washed, cleansed, and sanctified, from whence ariseth the answer of a good conscience towards God. And in this light the conscience is still kept good; but though it hath its habitation in the light, if it keep not its habitation, but go out from thence into the darkness, it is soon defiled and corrupted again.

Eighthly, I have (and bless the Lord I daily do still) experienced faith, the heavenly faith of the new birth, the precious gift of God to his own children, in this pure blessed light of the Son of God, which shines from the heavenly glory into the hearts of his redeemed ones. Unbelief came at first from the darkness, and lodgeth in the darkness, issuing thence into those that give ear to the dark spirit; but faith springs from the holy root of life in the heart. Here I cannot but believe, and also know him in whom I do believe, who is the holy power of life and light, who opposeth and overcometh the prince of darkness, who hath the power of death. And in the light God carries on the work of faith with power; and unbelief, which stops it, is not able to enter the minds of those, who are stayed upon the Lord in his pure light.

Ninthly,

Ninthly, In the light I taste and enjoy the pure peace, which passeth man's understanding. In the darkness is condemnation and trouble, as man's mind comes to be awakened; but in the light is righteousness, justification, and peace, to all that dwell and abide there. Perfect peace the mind here grows up into, which the enemy cannot break or interrupt. Indeed, in the darkness, out of the light, the peace that is there is easily broken; but never in the light is the true peace broken.

Tenthly, In the light I have experience of the killing or mortifying of that which is contrary to the light. *I kill, I make alive, saith the Lord.* Indeed he doth so in and by his light. Doth not light expel darkness in the figure? Much more doth it so in the substance. Light drives away darkness, banisheth darkness, destroyeth darkness, in the mind that is truly enlightened by the Lord, and singly gives up to his light. Oh! the desolations of darkness (the works of darkness, the power of darkness) that God makes in the hearts of such as are sensible of, and subject to, the light of his Son shining there. The Lord there cuts his work short in righteousness, making an end of the kingdom of darkness, revealing his own kingdom instead thereof, and gathering and translating the mind thereinto.

Eleventhly, In the light I have experience of the new creation in Christ Jesus, even the passing away of the old things, and the new things coming instead thereof. The old heart gone, the hard heart gone, and a new and tender one instead thereof. The old law of sin and death taken out of the way, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus received in the place thereof. And the fear of the new covenant put into the new heart (in which is the beginning and perfection of the heavenly wisdom), and the Spirit of God put within, to enlighten, enliven, and fill the mind with life and righteousness, and cause it to walk with God in the new and living way, and to know his statutes and judgments, and do them.

Twelfthly, In the light the gospel-love is known and springs. In the darkness is enmity; but in the light is love. It is true indeed, that here the whole law is fulfilled, even of loving the Lord God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbour as one's self. Yea, here one is not only commanded to love enemies, but taught and enabled so to do. Yea, keep but here in the light, no enmity can spring up, but only love to the greatest enemies, whom we have no coals of wrath, but only of love to heap upon.

Thirteenthly, Here I meet with, and partake of, a cool, meek, patient, tender, gentle, quiet, lowly spirit, which is of the Lord, and of much esteem with him. This is the Lamb's nature, who is light; and this also is their nature who are of the Lamb, and walk in the light of the Lamb. All Esau's roughness, all Ishmael's disdain and scoffing, all Cain's envy and cruelty towards his brother, is of the darkness, whereof Cain, Ishmael, and Esau are, and wherein they walk, and their offspring; but this is not found in them who are light in the Lord, and who walk in the light, as he

is in the light. And in patience to possess the soul, and to be tender towards sinners, meek, quiet, and humble before the Lord, and of a gentle spirit towards all. Oh! who, besides the children of light, know the preciousness of being thus created by the Lord, and of thus walking before him, in the light of the Lord Jesus, in the renewings of the mind by him, in the life and power, wherein he anew createth and changeth, these things become natural. For in the light, whatever is of the darkness, whatever is corrupt, whatever is of the devil's kingdom, is discovered and removed from them that take up the light's yoke; and a contrary nature planted in the mind instead thereof, which brings forth quite other fruits, even of a contrary kind to what the darkness brought forth before. So that as it was said of Christ, Behold the Lamb of God; so it may be said of them, behold the lambs of God, who are sweet, meek, gentle, lowly in heart like him, bringing forth fruits like him, and walking like sheep among wolves, as he also walked.

Lastly, (To mention no more) Here, in the light, I meet with certainty, assurance, satisfaction; yea, infallibility. I meet with the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, which is infallible. I meet with God's witness, which is an infallible witness. I meet with God's Spirit, which is an infallible Spirit, who infallibly leads into all truth, and infallibly guides in the truth. I meet with an infallible shepherd, who hath an infallible voice, and gives to his sheep an infallible ear, wherewith they infallibly hear. He opens an infallible eye, and gives to it an infallible sight of God, and the heavenly mysteries of his kingdom. The Spirit breathes infallibly, begets infallibly, leads infallibly, creates a new heart, a right spirit; which heart, which spirit, is of God's infallible nature, like him; for that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. That which is born of man's fallible spirit and wisdom is fallible; but that which is born of God's Spirit and heavenly wisdom, is of the nature of his Spirit and wisdom; and hence it is that wisdom is justified of her children. The apostle speaks to the Galatians of having begun in the Spirit, *Ch. iii. 3.* and did they not begin in that which is infallible? And if they went on in the Spirit, did they not go on in that which is infallible? I never found the light deceive me, nor did I ever find the birth of God's Spirit, the holy elect seed, deceived in me. And the new and living way, wherein this birth walks, is infallible, in which there is no erring by those who eye the Lord, and follow his Spirit therein. This is the way cast up (the way of holiness, life, and peace, for the ransomed and redeemed of the Lord to walk in in the gospel-days, in which the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err, *Isa. xxxv. 8.* The Lord, who hath promised, is able to make it good. The Lord make it more and more manifest, and bring more and more people into it, and keep them in the guidance of his blessed Spirit of truth, that they may see his light, and walk therein, and not let in any temptations from the spirit of darkness, and so follow him, and miss of the guide unto, and the preserver in, the new and living way.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

I DO not say that I, as a man, am infallible, or that any of us as men are infallible; but God's light, God's grace, God's truth, God's Spirit, God's wisdom and power, is infallible; and so far as we partake of that, are gathered into, and abide in that, we partake of that which is infallible, and are gathering into, and abide in that, which is infallible. And oh! let not men rest in, or be contented with, that knowledge which is fallible, but press after unity and fellowship with the Lord in his infallible Spirit; there being no true union nor fellowship with him in any thing that is fallible.

Oh! that Protestants, Papists, Jews, Turks, Indians, did all know and own this light, that there might be an end of the darkness and misery, wherewith mankind hath been so long overwhelmed; and happiness both in particular nations, and in the whole world, might be experienced in the stead thereof. For mens erring from the light and Spirit of God, hath been the cause of all their misery; and their returning to the light and Spirit of God (from which all have erred) will take away the cause of their misery, and in it (as they faithfully subject to the Lord and travel therein) they shall find his power, love, and mercy revealed, towards their restoring unto happiness.

Thirty-first of the 5th
Month, 1679.

I. P.

CONCERNING THE
T I M E S and S E A S O N S,
Both which have Been, and which are yet to Be.

WHEN God made man in his own image, placing him in Paradise, and giving him dominion over the works of his hands; then was a time of great joy to Adam and Eve, and should have still been so to them, and all mankind, had they continued in the state wherein they were created.

When Eve, and by her means Adam, hearkened to the voice of the Serpent, disobeyed the Lord their Creator, aspiring after wisdom, and the knowledge of good and evil, out of God's way; then was a season of misery

Adam and all his posterity; the holy and heavenly image being lost, and a cursed image gained in the stead thereof, and so man thrust out of Paradise, and the blessedness thereof, into the earth, which was cursed for man's sake. So in this state, sin and the curse is man's portion, instead of the holiness and blessedness, which his Creator had allotted him.

When God promised the blessed seed, and revealed himself to the fathers in the faith, begetting sons to himself, who heard his voice, obeyed and walked with him; then was a blessed time and season to them, though sin and death reigned in the world. But when the sons of God also forgot him, and mingled their seed with the corrupted world, then the deluge came, sweeping away all but Noah with his family, and the creatures saved in the ark.

When the Lord chose the Jews to be a people to himself, from amidst all nations, delivering them by his outstretched arm out of Egypt, destroying Pharaoh and his host, and led them through the wilderness, fitting the succeeding generation for the good land, bringing them into it, blessing and establishing them in it, while they feared him and walked in covenant with him, then was a blessed time and season with that people. But when they provoked God, brought his judgments often, and at last utter ruin and desolation upon themselves, then were seasons of great misery and distress, and at last of utter destruction to them.

While the Gentiles were cast off, and were no people, being of the corrupt seed which God hath not chosen, nor had any delight in, and while they knew not the living God, but worshiped stocks and stones, and so were liable to the pouring down of his wrath and indignation upon all occasions, and to utter ruin and destruction, when their iniquities were full, it was a sad time and season with them, wherein they were estranged from the life of God, and his holy covenant of promise, and were without God in the world.

When the Lord preached the gospel to the Gentiles, by his holy apostles and ministers, manifesting Christ to them, the hope of glory, the mystery hid from ages and generations, engrafting them into the holy vine and olive-tree, giving them to partake of the sweetness and fatness thereof, even of the riches of his grace and goodness in his Son, who is eternal life, and gives eternal life to all his; then was such a time and season of love, grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ (both towards Jews and Gentiles) as had not been known in the world before.

When the Christian church apostatized, the love in many waxing cold, men minding the name of Christianity, and form of Godliness, but not the life and power, and so the Lord was provoked against them, to remove their candlestick out of its place, and give up the outward court to the Gentiles, and so the Spirit was lost or departed from, the life lost, the power lost, the everlasting gospel hid from mens eyes, and darkness and mens inventions set up instead thereof, in nations, tongues, and people, and the witnesses

witnesses to any appearances of God's living truth and holy power persecuted; then was a sad time, then was a season of death and darkness reigning over all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, and the cup of fornication drunk by them all, and all generally bewitched by it, except those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life. This was the greatest time of darkness (wherein the mystery of iniquity most deeply wrought in the deepest ways of deceit) that ever was in the world.

When the church comes again out of the wilderness, when the Spirit and power of God builds up again the gospel-church in its primitive glory, when the everlasting gospel is preached again to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, in the authority and power of God, when the Spirit of the Lord is poured out plentifully on his sons and daughters, and they prophesy, walk, and live in it, when God dwells and walks in his people, and his true light shines in them, dispelling the darkness thoroughly, and filling them with the glory and majesty of the Lord, and they ascend up, out of the world's spirit and nature, into his spirit and nature, even in the sight of their enemies, and the full wrath of the Lamb be poured out on Babylon, and the full glory revealed in Sion; then shall there be such a day of brightness and pure heavenly glory, as shall dazzle the eyes of all beholders.

But the passing away of this night, and the bringing forth of this day, will be very terrible and dreadful, both in particulars and in nations. The kingdoms of this world must indeed become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; but it will require great power to bring it about. The wrath and strength of the spirit of darkness will be working against the Lord and his power to the utmost; and the more it works against the Lord and his power, the more will the Lord's power, and the wrath of the Lamb, be revealed against that spirit, and against all its devices and undertakings against the counsel and power of the Lord. Oh! blessed are they that are of the Lamb's nature and Spirit, of his righteousness and meekness; for the wrath of the Lamb will not be kindled against them, but he will be a munition of rocks unto them, and their inward life shall be preserved, and they shall enjoy peace with the Lord in the midst of all that shall outwardly befall them.

Mesborow in Kent, Twenty-
Second of the 6th Month,
1679.

The everlasting gospel hath been preached in this nation (and also other nations), just after that very manner as it was foretold it should, *Rev. xiv. 16. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and fountains of waters.*

Now they that have heard this blessed sound of the everlasting gospel, and have learned to fear God with this fear which the gospel calls for
(which

(which is the fear of the new covenant, which is not taught by the precepts of men, but which God puts into the heart in the new covenant), and to give glory to him, bowing to him, and learning righteousness of him, in the hour of his judgment upon their souls, and have worshiped him, and him only, in his Spirit and truth, which is the gospel-worship, or the worship of God according to the everlasting gospel; these are accounted with God knowers and obeyers of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are a peculiar people to God, whom he hath taken an especial care of, and whom he will hide under the shadow of his wings, and in the secret of his pavilion, while his wrath is poured out upon peoples and nations.

But others that have not been gathered under the shadow of God's wings, by the preaching of the everlasting gospel, who have not known or obeyed the sound thereof; when the storm comes, when the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (whereof this nation is full, and hath had several tokens of God's great displeasure for a long time), they will not find a shelter, though they flee to the rocks and mountains to hide and cover them from the wrath of the Lamb, but will lie open to the stroke of the overflowing scourge, which useth to overflow nations, after such a deluge of sin as hath long overflowed this nation. Oh! that men could hear the voice of the rod, and him who hath appointed it, and seek an hiding place, and enter into the chamber of rest and quietness with the Lord, until the indignation be overpast.

Now unto any whose hearts are touched with the fear of the Lord, and the sense of his righteous judgments and wrath due to this nation (which doubtless have come in part already, and are coming faster and faster, and entering into the very heart and bowels of it), and who would escape the stroke of God's dreadful hand, and find inward rest and peace with him in the day of outward trouble and sore distress;

To such, a few words of advice, very early this morning, lay upon my heart.

First, Seek the Lord (Oh! do not seek the world, but seek the Lord, who redeems out of the spirit of the world, where the wrath comes, and upon which it is to seize)! And *seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be, ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger*, Zeph. ii. 3.

Secondly, Wait upon God, that ye may learn of him to *keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*. If ever ye know the issues of life, ye must know them there; and if ye know the issues of life there, and they sweetly issue up, and flow into your souls, they will refresh and delight you in the midst of all the fore afflictions, troubles, and distresses, which can befall you outwardly. Read *Psa. xlv.* and consider:

Thirdly, Mind who knocks at the door of your hearts, whether it be the destroyer or Saviour of the soul; for both these knock often at the door, but men are not aware thereof. And wait to receive power from God to be faithful door-keepers, that ye may keep the door of your hearts shut against the

the enemy, when he knocks with any temptation, and may open them to the Lord, when he knocks with any motion or pure stirring of life.

Fourthly, Wait to know, and experience truly, and also more and more, the Christian Spirit and state, the state of a servant to the Father, and his Son Christ, the state of a soldier, the state of a pilgrim and holy traveller, to be doing the Lord's work (the Lord's will, and not your own), to be fighting the Lord's battles, against his and the soul's enemies, and to be travelling farther and farther out of the spirit, mind, and nature of this world (wherein the kingdom of darkness stands) into God's Spirit, where the kingdom of the dear Son is known and entered into, by those that deny their own wisdom, and become as little children.

Many have the form of godliness, who are not accepted of the Lord; but such only as know God's power, and are led by his Spirit, such are indeed in Christ Jesus; for the holy power grafts the soul, mind, and spirit of a man, into the holy stock and root of life. And such know the new creation in Christ, and the works of the new creation, which they perform and walk in (being God's *workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*). And here the *old things pass away* (which can pass away by no other means, but by the revealing of the arm and power of God inwardly in the heart, and by its effectual operation there), *and so all things become new*. Now, where all things become new, where the heart is new, the mind and spirit new, the desires new, the joys and delights new, the life and conversation new, and the soul walks before the Lord, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, even in the newness thereof; what is there for the wrath of God to seize upon?

Though the Lord be a consuming fire, yet it is to his enemies, to sin, to unrighteousness, to the chaffy, earthly mind and nature; he is not so to his children, to the wheat, to the holy seed, to them that are new created and cleansed by him, to them that fear him, love him, walk with him, keep his commandments, obey the gospel of his Son, denying all for him, and following the Shepherd and leader of their souls, out of all untruth and unrighteousness, into all truth and righteousness. Surely, these shall not only be able to abide, but dwell with the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings; and that shall be their safety and shelter, when the flames thereof break forth to consume and burn up the chaff every-where.

Twenty-fifth of the 6th
Month, 1679.

POST.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE gospel religion is very precious, being inwardly felt and experienced in the life and power of it; but a bare profession of it, out of the life and power of godliness, is of no value in the sight of God, nor is it of any profit or advantage to the soul.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

7 AP 59

INDEX.

I N D E X

TO THE

S E C O N D V O L U M E.

B.

BAPTISM, concerning it, Page 415. 464. 622. **BLASPHEMY** and **BLASPHEMERS**, some Questions answered concerning, 345.

C.

CHRIST, which is the true saving Knowledge of Christ, and which not, 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. Queries concerning Christ, and his Appearances, 15. Concerning Christ, 24. What it is to be United to Christ, 41. What is the true Confession of Christ, 43. Which died at Jerusalem the Quakers own, 104. The Way of knowing Christ's Spirit, 113. Christ Jesus the Redeemer and Saviour, 154. A few Words concerning the true Christ, and how it may be known which is he, 242. Of the Flesh and Blood of Christ, in Answer to T. Hickes, 250, &c. Concerning Christ's Righteousness, 318. 517. Concerning Christ, 453. Concerning the Spirit of Christ, 496. The Law of Christ, 509. His Ministry or Priesthood, 515. Of the true Know-

ledge of Christ, *ibid.* Concerning the Offering of Christ without the Gates of Jerusalem, 615. The Mystery of Christ, and of his Enlightening, Quickening, Circumcising, and Baptizing, from some Scriptures, 642.

CHURCH, some Propositions concerning Church Worships and Ordinances, 28. Concerning the Primitive Church, and the Apostasy, 39. Questions and Answers concerning the Church of the New Covenant, 64. Queries concerning the False Church, 67. Of the true and false Church, 72. Of the Church in its first and pure State, 75. in its declining State, 80. In its declined and fallen State, 83. In its Recovery, 85. What is the true Church, 206. Concerning the true Church, 290. 312. 320. Some Queries concerning the State of the Church, as it was in the Apostles Days and was to be afterwards, 360.

COVENANT of Life opened, 87. Questions and Answers concerning the Church of the New Covenant, 64. Queries concerning the New Covenant, 96. 125. Concerning the New Covenant, 146. 350. 470. Knowledge of it, 213. Fear of it, 214. Concerning the Old and New Covenant,

433. Concerning the Rule of the New Covenant, 44. The Two Covenants, 469.

Cross of Christ, what it is, 208. The Author's Experience concerning it, 225.

E.

ELECTION and REPROBATION concerning, 91. 92. How a Man must make his Calling and Election sure, 209. Election, a Question or two concerning it answered, 335. The Way to know one's Election, &c. 391.

F.

FAITH, what the true Faith is, 210.

The Author's Experience concerning it, 222. Concerning Faith, 599.

FEAR, concerning the true Fear, 600.

FREE WILL, and Falling from Grace, concerning, 95.

G.

GOD'S LOVE, the Universality of it, 89. 192. Concerning God's Power, 219.

A Question answered, about knowing God's Spirit, 230.

GOSPEL, concerning the Gospel-State, 408. A Question about Preaching the Everlasting Gospel, answered, 513.

Of the Grace of the Gospel, 520.

GOVERNMENT, concerning Church Government, 567. 586.

H.

HAT, Reason of taking it off in Time of Prayer, 563.

HOLINESS, What it is, 208. 523.

HOPE, What is the true Hope, 214. 600.

HUMILITY, concerning Poverty of Spirit, and Humility, 216.

Jews, somewhat in the Love of God to the Jews Natural, 274. Somewhat of Concern to the Jews spiritual, 280.

IMPUTATION of Righteousness, concerning, 448. 492. 616.

INWARD Impressions, concerning, 455.

JOY, which is the true Joy, 215.

JUDGING, what the Author has experienced concerning it, 228.

JUSTIFICATION witnessed by the Obedient, 141. What it is, 211. Justification and Sanctification, the Author's Experience of, 221. Concerning Justification, 369. 462. 469.

L.

LAMB'S WAR, concerning, 293.

LAW, inward and outward, 202. How God Writes his Law in the Heart, 204.

LIGHT within asserted, 173. What it doth inwardly in the Heart, 177. How the Mind comes to be enlightened, 179. How the Light, or Candle of the Lord is diminished and extinguished, 180. Concerning the Light of God's Spirit, 204. Concerning the Light, 458. 472. 490.

LOVE, what the true Love is, 212. 600.

M.

MANKIND, concerning God's Love to them, 463.

MEETINGS Silent, concerning, 352.

MINISTRY, Work of the true Ministry, 63. Concerning the true Ministry, 76. 170. 205. 291. 321. 433. 547. 637.

MIRACLES, a Question concerning, answered, 348.

MOTIONS inward, to know whence they are, 115.

MYSTERY of Life, and Mystery of the Fellowship which is therein. 227.

N.

NOTES and OBSERVATIONS on Passages of Scripture, *Phil.* iii. 3. *Heb.* vi. 4, 5. *John* x. *Isaiah* liv. lviii. p. 129. 131. *2 Pet.* i. 18, 19. *Rom.* ix. 18. *John* xvii. 3. *1 Cor.* xii. 3. *John* vi. 45. *1 John* v. 12. *John* vi. 55, 56. *Psal.* xxxvi. 9. *Isa.* lv. 1, 2, 3. *John* iv. 14. *1 John* i. 2, 3. *Matt.* xi. 18, 29, 30. *1 John* v. 20. *2 Cor.* iv. 6. *2 Cor.* iii. 14. *John* viii. 31, 32. *Rom.* vi. 14. *Isa.* iv. 5. *Isa.* xii. 1, 2, 3. *Rev.* iii. 18. *1 John* ii. 27. *Psal.* lxxxv. 9. *Rev.* iii. 20. See Observations on the above Passages, pages 233 to 241. *Psal.* xlvii. page 289. Some Queries on Chap. xxix and xxx, of *Deut.* compared with *Rom.* x. p. 362. Some Queries on *Col.* i. 27, 28, 29. page 365. Observations on *2 Peter* iii. 14, 15, 16. page 431. Queries on *Rom.* vi. vii. and viii. page 437. Query on *Matt.* vi. 33.

O.

OBEDIENCE, what it is, 211. Some Experiences concerning, 224. ORDINANCES and APPOINTMENTS of God to the Jews, concerning, 106.

P.

PAPISTS, something to, 309. PATIENCE, what the true Meekness and Patience is, 213. 601. PAUL'S EXPERIENCE explained, 158. What Paul was, 65. PEACE, which is True, 215. A few Words concerning the Way of Peace, 263. PENINGTON ISAAC, Account of his Experiences, 3. 49. 110. 162. 165. 168. 218. 273. 300. 359. 474. 476. 483. 511. 619. 670. PERFECTION, concerning, 464. 490.

PERSECUTION, concerning, 60. Some Queries concerning Compulsion in Matters of Religion, 660. PRAYER, concerning, 108. What is true Prayer, 209. The Author's Experience of, 226. How God teacheth to Pray, 403. 406. PRINCIPLE of DARKNESS, and of the pure heavenly Light, 123. PROMISES, concerning applying them, 44. PROPHECY, Considerations of the more sure Word of Prophecy, 185.

Q.

QUAKERS, what they have witnessed, 24. What their Religion is, 59. 163. How they were visited, 168. Brief Account of them, 259. A few Words concerning the Doings and Sufferings of the People called Quakers, 266. Concerning God's gathering them Home to himself, 526. What they fought after, 618.

R.

REFORMATION, concerning the Time and Work of it, 493. REGENERATION, concerning, 208. RELIGION, of Certainty, and rightly grounded Assurance in Matters of Religion, 57. REPENTANCE, What is true Repentance, 210. RIGHTEOUSNESS, concerning, 139. Of Man's Righteousness, 151. How to learn Righteousness, 243.

S.

SABBATH, or Gospel-Rest, concerning, 118. SALVATION, how witnessed, 207. SCRIPTURES, Quakers own them, 105. Concerning Understanding them aright, 201, 202. Whether the Scripture be the Sun or Fountain, 203. Whether the

I N D E X

the Declaration of Scripture is the Word.
204. Whether all things necessary be
therein contained, 206. Concerning
the Grounds of Mens Misunderstand-
ing and Wrestling them, 336. Con-
cerning Misunderstanding the Scriptures,
476. Concerning Reading them aright,
532.
SEED of the KINGDOM, concerning,
218. 230.
SEPARATION, concerning, 60.
SHEPHERD and SHEEP, concerning,
37.
SOUL'S FOOD, 218.

T.

TEMPTATIONS, the Author's Expe-
rience concerning, 219.
TRINITY, the Author's Experience con-
cerning it, &c. 615.

TRUTH, a Guidance to the Principle
and Path of it, 33.

U.

UNIFORMITY, an Objection answered
concerning it, 584.

W.

WILL (FREE), concerning, 478.
WISDOM of Man to be turned from, 184.
WORDS, concerning the Form of Sound
Words, 453.
WORKS, what good Works are, 212.
Works of the Old and New Covenant,
473.
WORSHIP, Account of the Ground of
our Worship, 444.

7 AP 59

E R R A T U M.

Vol. I. page xiv. line 6, for fruitful read faithful.

F I N I S.

REPORT

The first part of the report
deals with the general
situation of the country
and the progress of the
work during the year.
The second part
deals with the results of the
work done during the year.
The third part
deals with the conclusions
drawn from the work done
during the year.

The first part of the report
deals with the general
situation of the country
and the progress of the
work during the year.
The second part
deals with the results of the
work done during the year.
The third part
deals with the conclusions
drawn from the work done
during the year.

CONCLUSIONS

The first part of the report
deals with the general
situation of the country
and the progress of the
work during the year.
The second part
deals with the results of the
work done during the year.
The third part
deals with the conclusions
drawn from the work done
during the year.

The first part of the report
deals with the general
situation of the country
and the progress of the
work during the year.
The second part
deals with the results of the
work done during the year.
The third part
deals with the conclusions
drawn from the work done
during the year.